

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Teachers and Tongues
James 3:1-12

Last time...the relationship between faith and works: faith works
Faith is active, faith has evidence

This time...teachers and tongues

We will be in James 3

v1 be not many masters...greater condemnation:

In “his” letter of exhortation to the Church, James moves from faith that works to teaching (in word and in deed)

masters = “instructors”, “teachers”

Context: congregational teachers, like James (“we”)

Eph 4:11-13

1 Cor 12:28-30

NOT teaching your children and grandchildren

NOT teaching while witnessing (2 Tim 2:22-26)

Many people...men and, in these days, women...want to be a pastor/teacher

But,

a. 2 Tim 2:12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

b. James, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is quick to caution such ambition

First, the responsibility is great

- to not lord over people but to point them to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, for the instruction, correction, joy, peace, and encouragement they need
- to feed the sheep, not to beat them
- to counsel people in the Word of God but not to be the Holy Spirit
- to endure afflictions and make full proof of the ministry (2 Tim 4:5)

Secondly, the accountability is also great...

to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Head of the Body of Christ

(i.e. the church is Jesus’, not the pastor’s)

Heb 13:17 ...watch for your souls, as they that must give account...

The doctrine/teaching...in words and actions...of the pastor/teacher are to be Jesus', not his

Jesus said to the Pharisees, the pastors/teachers of the day

Matt 12:36-37 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

The standard is absolute: faithfulness to the Truth, the Word of God

A man called/equipped/gifted by God to feed His flock is to be as the judges set by Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron 19

- v6: well advised that they do so for the Lord and are accountable to Him, not employed by men and accountable to them, not hirelings of a Church Board or a voting congregation (John 10:11-13)
- v6: is joined by God in the teaching...Spirit-filled, Spirit-led servant of God
- v7: guard his heart and mind in meekness and fear (1 Cor 2:1-5)
- v9: teaching the Word of God (fear of the Lord, 2 Tim 3:16-17), not words of man, being faithful to God and His Word
- v9: with a perfect heart...the heart of God (a heart after God's own heart) and the mind of Christ
- v11b: doing the work of the ministry courageously...boldly and uncompromising in the face of hostility or social pressures

Given

- the importance of the ministry of a pastor/teacher
- the responsibility of the hearer...Acts 17:11, John 14:26, 1 John 2:27

Scripture has much to say about pastors/teachers

Faithful

1 Sam 3:19

let not one Word fall to the ground

1 Sam 12:23-25

teach good and right way (the Lord's!!!)

Neh 8:7-8

specifically, with intelligence and wisdom,
so the hearer understands

Gal 1:6-10

Acts 20:20-30

pleasing to God, servant of Christ
keep nothing back that is profitable
in bonds and afflictions, unmoved
resolute in finishing well
teach the entire counsel of God
warning of false teachers/wolves

2 Cor 1:24

2 Cor 10:8

1 Tim 4:1-6, 15-16

2 Tim 4:1-4

helper

for edification, not destruction (of faith)

remembrance, nourish, sound doctrine,

VERY mindful of doctrine always

reprove/rebuke/exhort patiently,

not compromising the doctrine

1 Peter 5:1-4

feed, willing oversight, example vs lord

Unfaithful/false

Matt 7:15-20

wolves in sheep's clothing, discernable by

Acts 17:11

Matt 15:8-9

doctrine is man's, not God's

Luke 20:45-47

all for show

1 Tim 1:1-8

fables and vain jangling/babble

1 Tim 6:3-5

not Christ-like, in word or deed

Titus 1:10-11

disorderly and disobedient, babblers and idle

talkers, deceivers and seducers

2 Peter 2

heresies many will follow, covetous,

making merchandise, self-willed, corrupt,

walk after the flesh, allure with the lusts of

the flesh

The Lord will be with the good/faithful and against the bad/unfaithful/false

The good/faithful have a calling of God upon their lives

The bad/unfaithful/false have chosen the ministry as a worldly profession

And the bad/unfaithful/false teachers bear a greater condemnation for

- not teaching the Truth (John 17:17) and, thereby misleading people
- misrepresenting the Lord
- self-promotion for self-exaltation and self-advantage in worldly things
- the "ripple effect"...the impact on many others of their false doctrine, self-will, etc

Pastor/teacher is not a job to take lightly or a job to aspire to in the flesh...

it is a calling of God

God calls and equips and gifts and sends a servant, not a boss,

who has a shepherd's heart, not a self-serving heart

And He holds them to a higher standard

Therefore I am VERY mindful to “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15)

Why?

- Love the Lord God that Rom 8:5 Who has given me this calling (1 Tim 1:12)
- Fear the Lord God of Heb 10:31

How “rightly divide the Word of truth”?

- No substitute for time and effort (no place for “winging it”)
- Context
 - entire Bible, verse-by-verse, not topical
 - enhanced by chronological study
- Scripture interprets Scripture; interpretation belongs to the Author, not to man
- Listening to my Teacher...and then give what I get (not edit)

The standard for pastors/teachers is absolute – faithfulness to the truth!
What I say and do affects others and I am accountable to Jesus Christ for that!

Needed: The Holy Spirit having control of his (my) tongue

v2a we offend all:

Congregational teaching is by speaking the truth of God
The Cross is offensive
The Holy Spirit convicts the sin in our lives

So, often, a Word from the Lord is both

- offensive (convicting)...to the flesh
- edifying, exhorting, and comforting...to the spirit

v2b not in word...perfect man:

Now the context broadens to “any man”...to pastors/teachers and every believer

Those who can control their tongue are perfect/complete...opposite of James 1:26

Because if they can control their tongue, they can control their whole body

Prov 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles

1 Cor 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The perfect man does not have any issues with

Gal 5:16-17 flesh lusting against the Spirit, walking in the Spirit
so that he can do the things he should (Word)

Rom 7:18-25 not doing what should and doing what should not
SoM murder and adultery and love

Who can control their tongue and therefore their entire body, being perfect?!
Therefore, we must exercise great care when we engage our tongue!

Let's see what the Spirit of God says about that
First, two analogies of our tongue

v3-4 bits...horses...ships...helm:

We put a bit and bridle in a horse's mouth...and my granddaughter can control an
animal many times her size, weight, and strength...
even a Clydesdale that stands 6' tall and weighs 2000 lbs, possessing
bone-crushing strength

A captain of a massive ship

- an oil tanker, 3 football fields long and 1 football field wide
- a Boeing 747 weighs 455 tons at takeoff, as long as a 20 story building
controls/steers the vessel driven by winds (mechanical forces) far stronger than
man with a little helm/rudder;
the captain imposes his will on great forces with a little rudder

v5-6 Even so the tongue:

Just as is little bit that can control a large animal and as a little rudder that can
control a great ship, so is the tongue – little and mighty in effect

When controlled by the Holy Spirit, the tongue accomplished great things

Rom 10:9-15

But when not controlled by the Holy Spirit, the tongue

- is a fire, a bolt of lightning
 - a little fire that becomes a great fire
 - the wildfire in CA started by a gender reveal party effect
 - all the wildfires in CA, OR, WA, CO, WY started...
small and then grew and grew, even “exploded”
 - the Chicago fire of 1871
 - the SF fire of 1906
- ignites on fire everything
 - it ignites our children, parents, spouses with a fire from hell...
 - the devil stresses or destroys relationship with wagging tongues!

- is a habitation of things wrong, unjust, and unrighteous/displeasing
 - Dissentions
 - Divisions
 - Strife
 - Backbiting
 - Gossip
 - Slander
 - Lying
 - Deceit
 - Blasphemy
- defiles/stains/makes impure the whole body
- is as of the fire of hell on earth...leaves a “scorched earth”

The deepest wounds we can inflict on another are inflicted by our tongue
 Sometimes our words are as sharp as a surgeon’s knife that cut all
 the way to the bone
 Other times our words are as brutal as a chainsaw or a
 sledgehammer

The wounds caused by our words take the longest time to heal and are
 prone to infection...bitterness that defiles many

Consider nails in a fence: pounded in with force, removed with difficulty,
 hole remains

A “wild tongue”...a loose cannon...is a great weapon in the hands of the
 devil

STOP before you give someone a piece of your mind – you probably
 cannot afford to lose anymore pieces

v7-8 beasts...tamed of mankind...no man can tame:

Given dominion over animals by God, man has tamed them

- horses
- oxen
- elephants
- lions
- tigers
- killer whales
- cobras
- falcons

However, no man has tamed the tongue...v2b is impossible for man,
 he has not dominion over (cannot govern) his own tongue

The tongue in our mouth is

- an unruly evil...harm and wickedness unrestrainable by man
- full of deadly poison...a toxic, lethal killer on par with strychnine and the other worst poisons known to man

v9-10 bless we God...curse we men:

The tongue makes two-faced people

(do they make COVID masks for two-faced people?)

Out of one side of our mouth we bless God and praise the Lord and we say
Amen and Hallelujah

Keep Table 1 of the Law – Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
soul, mind, and strength

Out of the other side of our mouth we rail on, gossip about, curse, and slander
people...made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27)

Break Table 2 of the Law – Love your neighbor as yourself
(the Royal Law)

This hypocrisy, deceit, and double-mindedness...expressed by the tongue...
simply should not be since we are to be Christ-like

v11-12 fountain...sweet...bitter:

Using other metaphors of that which should not be:

- A fountain of water is either sweet/fresh or bitter/acrid, but never both
- Fruit trees bear fruit after their own kind, not any other kind

Therefore, followers of Jesus Christ are to act and speak as they are (Jesus-kind)
and not what they used to be (dead-in-sin mankind)

Application/Lessons

1. Pastors/teachers...take heed!!!

Be well advised

Guard your heart and mind

Be faithful to your calling and the One Who called you

2. All: The tongue...more powerful than a team of Clydesdales or a 747

The rudder is not only small, it is extraordinarily beneficial – the giant machine would be worthless without it

As is the follower of Jesus Christ with a Spirit-controlled tongue

Fire is very beneficial...for warmth and for cooking

As is the follower of Jesus Christ with a Spirit-controlled tongue

But, the tongue, when it is ungoverned, ignites great inferno of trouble and devastation

Prov 6:16-19 God hates a lying tongue, a false witness, and he that sows discord among brethren

Ps 52:2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully

Prov 17:20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.

Prov 26:28 A lying tongue hateth *those that are* afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

Prov 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise

Prov 15:4 A wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life: but perverseness therein *is* a breach in the spirit.

Prov 18:21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue

Prov 13:3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: *but* he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.

Prov 26:20 Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out: so where *there is* no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Eph 4:29-32

It is a heart issue...because the tongue is directly connected to the heart

May we take the Holy Spirit's "bit" into our mouths and our lives be led/controlled by Him

May we think, with the mind of Christ, before we speak

May the Holy Spirit sweeten the foulness in our mouths with Living Water

Ps 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue:
I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

Ps 141:3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Ps 17:3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night;
thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my
mouth shall not transgress.

Col 4:6 Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye
may know how ye ought to answer every man.