

# SPEAK LIFE

JAMES 3:1-12

Today we are going to be challenged to **SPEAK LIFE**. As followers of Jesus our mouths are to be used for what is GOOD & TRUE, to BLESS and not to harm.  
***Do the words I SAY honor my SAVIOR?***

Today we challenged to **SPEAK LIFE**. As followers of Jesus our mouths are to be used for what is GOOD & TRUE, to BLESS and not to harm. ***Is that TRUE of YOU?*** Think back on this past week & ask yourself this question:

***Do the words I SAY honor my SAVIOR?***

## A Teacher's Influence & Future Judgment

**James 3:1-2** (NIV) <sup>1</sup> Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that **we who teach will be judged more strictly**. <sup>2</sup> 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.

If everybody stumbles, then why would **teachers be judged more strictly?** Teachers influence others to follow what they teach.

**Jim Jones** a charismatic leader influenced thousands of people during the 70s, establishing "The People's Temple" in the 1950s. He preached against racism and brought many types of people together.

- In 1971 he moved his ministry to San Francisco. He faked healings, raised money, had many sexual affairs, and became addicted to drugs.
- Becoming more & more paranoid, Jones moved his ministry & followers to Guyana and built a town he called "Jonestown". It was there that 909 people died (including over 200 children), as Jones told them to drink cyanide-laced koolaid.<sup>1</sup>
- While many false teachers would never lead their people to suicide, they still lead people to spiritual toward diluted doctrines, false assumptions, and even to a false gospel.

**Howard Hendricks** who died at 88 years old, was called "Prof" by more than 10,000+ students during 60 years of teaching at Dallas Theological Seminary. Some referred to him as the **John Wooden of education!**<sup>2</sup> (Wooden won 10 national championships at UCLA and is considered the greatest basketball coach of all time.)

- Dr. Hendricks planted the seeds that resulted in the ministry of **FamilyLife**.
- Despite losing his right eye to cancer, falling off a platform while speaking (at the age of 80) and breaking a couple of ribs, and battling other health issues, he didn't coast to the finish.
- Well known quote: *"The only thing that is eternal is the Word of God and people."*
- Some of his students include: **Tony Evans**, one of the most prominent black preachers in America; **Bruce Wilkinson**, **David Jeremiah**, & **Chuck Swindoll**.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/adst/the-jonestown-massacre\\_b\\_8592338.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/adst/the-jonestown-massacre_b_8592338.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/life-issues/relationships/men/remembering-the-legacy-of-prof-hendricks>

☐ These 2 teachers, Jim Jones & Howard Hendricks, greatly influenced their students for eternity. One teacher chose to **SPEAK DEATH**. The other teacher chose to **SPEAK LIFE**.

And THIS IS WHY...

**James 3:1-2** (NIV) <sup>1</sup> Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> 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.

Teachers should be SERIOUS about how they LIVE and what they TEACH. **Kent Hughes** writes:

*"The church in the United States is dying from a lack of good teachers in its pulpit and Sunday schools, but we need teachers with right motives."<sup>3</sup>*

**The teacher who can stand before God unashamed for what he/she has taught, will teach what is RIGHTEOUS to those made in God's image.** Teachers, may we be study well & teach what is TRUE, knowing that we will be accountable to the KING for WHAT we say and HOW we say it!!!

Teacher or not, the truth is, controlling what comes out of our mouths is a problem for us ALL!!!

### **Job**

**Job 40:1-4** (NET) <sup>1</sup> Then the LORD answered Job: <sup>2</sup> "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let the person who accuses God give him an answer!" <sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the LORD: <sup>4</sup> "Indeed, I am completely unworthy—how could I reply to you? **I put my hand over my mouth to silence myself.**"

### **Moses**

**Psalm 106:32-33** (NET) <sup>32</sup> They made him angry by the waters of Meribah, and Moses suffered because of them, <sup>33</sup> for they aroused his temper, and **he spoke rashly.**

### **Isaiah**

**Isaiah 6:5** (NET) <sup>5</sup> I said, "Too bad for me! I am destroyed, for **my lips are contaminated by sin**, and I live among people whose lips are contaminated by sin. My eyes have seen the king, the Lord who commands armies."

**Peter** often opened his mouth to change feet. **Paul's** anger exploded from his mouth when he called the high priest a white-washed wall (Acts 23:3).

Like Job, Moses, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, and all the others, we should be asking...

### **Do the words I SAY honor my SAVIOR?**

Truth is, EVERY PERSON WHO HAS WALKED THE PLANET has had trouble keeping that little bitty powerful muscle (e.g. tongue) in it's place.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, James: Faith That Works, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 128.

## Small Size, Incredible Influence

**James 3:3-5** (NIV) <sup>3</sup> When we put **bits** into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.

Consider how a huge powerful animal like a horse, is controlled by such a small **bit**. So too, a MASSIVE SHIP is controlled by what is, in comparison, a **tiny rudder**.

**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.**

Think about it...how many times has trouble come into your life because of what YOU or SOMONE else SAID?

☀ **Kent Hughes** writes: *"The uncontrolled tongue has a direct pipeline to Hell!"*<sup>4</sup>

## Tame the Tongue?

**James 3:7-8** (NIV) <sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Sometimes this VERBAL VENOM flows out in the form of:

- **GOSSIP** = saying behind a person's back what you would never say face to face
- **FLATTERY** = saying to a person's face what you would never say behind his/her back.
- **LIES & SLANDER** = saying what you KNOW is NOT TRUE to protect yourself or harm another.
- **CRITICISM** = Willing to cut, but not willing to heal.
- **BOASTING** = Making yourself the hero of the story
- **PROFANITY & CRUDENESS** = Language we wouldn't use if Jesus were physically near.
- **SARCASM & UNKINDNESS** = Cutting comments sometimes camouflaged by humor.
- **FALSE TEACHING** = leading others AWAY from truth & Jesus of the Scriptures.

**No human being can tame the tongue**, but the God who made us CAN transform our mind & our mouth!!!! Otherwise, there is NO REASON for Jacob to say what comes next.

## Speak Life!!!

**James 3:9-12** (NIV) <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we **praise our Lord and Father**, and with it we curse human beings, who have been **made in God's likeness**. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, **this should not be**. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

The clear answer to this question is **NO!!!** We shouldn't **praise** our great God and then **curse those made** in His likeness. If we leave this place, after praising our Creator, and begin to curse His creation...we have a problem.

You were created to **SPEAK LIFE!!!** What if your words were a **PIPELINE from HEAVEN** full of Truth, Kindness, Encouragement, Celebration, Prayerfulness, Humility, Sharing Jesus!!!!

<sup>4</sup> R. Kent Hughes, James: Faith That Works, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 139.

Ask yourself:

### ***Do the words I SAY honor my SAVIOR?***

***Has there been a HEART CHANGE?*** Jesus said, “*for his mouth speaks from what fills his heart.*” (Lk 6:45) Or said another way, “*What’s down in the well will come up in the bucket.*” Could it be that what’s coming out of our mouths is an indication of what’s true in our hearts? “

### **FEET2FAITH**

- 1) **SEEK God.** Ask for His forgiveness and help.
- 2) **APPROACH people** and ask forgiveness. Asking others to forgive you brings real accountability into your life.
- 3) **Study the Scriptures** to see how God EMPOWERS & EXPECTS us to **SPEAK LIFE.**

### ***Do the words I SAY honor my SAVIOR?***

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. How did today's teaching challenge you, encourage you, or generate questions you need to have answered?
2. **Read James 3:1-2.** Why should TEACHERS be careful about what they teach & how they live? Should this keep people from teaching or is there another purpose for James's warning?
3. Without naming others, what are some ways you have seen “the tongue” start a fire?
4. What are some ways you have seen “the tongue” bless, encourage, share truth & speak life?
5. Read **Luke 6:43–45.** How does the mouth indicate what's in the heart?
6. What are some ways we can encourage each other to SAY what honors our Savior?