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## **Be Careful What You Say**

**James 3:1-5a**

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**Transcript By: <https://riverside.fm/transcription>**

**00:01**

**Well, last week we concluded our look at chapter four in the gospel of Mark and we were looking at Jesus calming the storm. And this week as I've been away I've had some opportunity to just kind of reflect on that message and to think about how we respond to things. Now, we have already seen in our study of Mark where he talked about be careful how you listen.**

**00:30**

**Now I want to talk about, be careful what you say.**

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**Because sometimes we can have the wrong kind of reaction, where we say something that we regret. That's the power of this little member in your body. It can bless, and it can curse. So with that in mind, I want to invite you to take your Bible and turn to James, chapter 3. And what I usually like to do when we complete a chapter in a book that we're studying is**

**01:05**

**to kind of take a couple weeks to do a special series and then come back to the book. I don't want, because it takes us a little bit of time to work through a book and especially a gospel with 16 chapters and we're not only starting chapter five and we've been in it already for a while, I don't want you to hate the book.**

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**And so, I mean, I've heard people, you know, pastors preach 25 years through Romans. And when they finally get to the end, yeah, there's people that love Romans, but there's also people that can't stand it after 25 years in it. I don't really quite understand that in my mind in that sense, but I don't want to create that kind of attitude in you. And so, we're going to take what we looked at last week.**

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by looking at the response of the disciples. As if you remember, they, when Jesus stood up and said to the storm, hush and be quiet, and immediately it became calm. They said, who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? Luke says that they were amazed, and both Luke and Mark say that they were afraid.

**02:21**

And I think of it this way, what's worse, having the Creator God in the boat or the storm outside the boat? Which one would be more fearful to you? I think more fearful would have God in the boat. And seeing Him do this miraculous sign and showing power over nature. And they've seen so many miracles that He had done by healings and driving out demons, and they heard Him teach.

**02:49**

Now he's preaching in parables and they don't quite understand all of that, but he's telling them the meaning of those parables.

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And so I want to take three weeks off from our study of Mark, and I want to focus on chapter three, just the 12 verses, in James 3. Now, I am the type that has a hard time going through a chapter or a verse or in a survey-style fashion. I just feel like that there's more there that I'm responsible with. And in the context of what we're doing, we need to take the time.

**03:27**

necessary to look at what the Word says and make sure that we understand it. And so let's go ahead and look at chapter 3 and I'm going to read just the first 12 verses.

**03:39**

It says, Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he

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says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

**04:05**

Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds and are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire. And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity.

**04:35**

The tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body and sets on fire the course of our life and is set on fire by hell. But every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea is tamed and has been tamed by the human race, but no one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil and full of deadly poison."

**05:03**

With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

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Some years ago, I came across a story about a young man's first day on his job in a supermarket.

**05:46**

And I want to read to you what happened on his first day.

**05:52**

He was a new clerk working in the Greens Goods Department of the supermarket. And a lady came up to him and said to him she wanted to buy half a head of lettuce.

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He tried to dissuade her from the goal, but she persisted. And finally, he says, I'll have to go to the back and talk to the manager.

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So he went to the rear of the store to talk to the manager, not noticing that the woman was walking behind him. How many of you have done that? When he got to the back of the store, he said to the manager, there's some stupid old bag out there who wants to buy half a head of lettuce. What should I tell her? Seeing the horrified look on the face of the manager, he turned around and seeing the woman and added, and this nice lady would like to buy the other half of the head of lettuce.

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Will it be all right? Well, considerably relieved, the manager said, that would be fine. Later in the day, he congratulated a boy on his quick thinking. And he asked, son, where are you from? And he said, I'm from Toronto, Canada, the home of beautiful hockey players and ugly women. Manager looked at him and said, my wife is from Toronto.

**07:17**

It's amazing what this little member can do. One person said, because the tongue is in a wet place, it can easily slip. And when you come to chapter 3 of James, he's already said a lot up to this point. And he's focusing in on the tongue being really of great concern. It's such a concern to him that he references the tongue in every chapter. It's only five chapters. But...

**07:46**

He makes mention of it several times in each chapter. And here in chapter 3 in these 12 verses we just read, he's using the tongue as a test of living faith. And he's indicating to us that the genuineness of a person's faith will be demonstrated by his speech.

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I always think about Peter there warming his hands at the fire.

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**08:13**

and the little girl says to him, you're one of them. Your speech gives you away. My question to you this morning, does people know that you belong to Christ because your speech about Christ gives you away? Or your speech in general gives you away because you don't have the speech of the world, you don't react?

**08:34**

the same way the world reacts when there's troubles and difficulties. Again, the context to the epistle of James here is the series of tests that he's given to show whether you're truly saved or not. In chapter one, he's already given the test of trials and then the test of temptation and the test of your reception to the Word. In chapter two, he deals with the test of partiality. In chapter three, now the test of the tongue.

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These are all legitimate things for us to look at, to determine whether we really are in the faith, that we really do live for Christ.

**09:15**

And it's certainly an area to examine. And I know, because I do it too, I think our mouths are sometimes shaped like our shoe, because we're always putting it in our mouth. We're always, at times, saying some of the wrong things. And how many times have you walked away from a situation when, oh, I wish I had never said that? Why did I say that? And even though you may go back to the person and apologize and ask for their forgiveness,

**09:44**

The problem is it is still out there. You said it, and the stinging of the words are still there. And yes, asking for forgiveness and apologizing for it, and if they really read you correctly and your remorse is real genuine, then that certainly does help them to forgive you. But sometimes our words could sting in such a fashion, and they come across with such harsh tones.

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Even in Proverbs 15 and verse 1 it talks about a soft answer turning away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

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So James is going to give three reasons why they, you, and I need to control our tongue.

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And today we're just going to look at the first five verses. We're going to see in these first five verses that the tongue has power to direct.

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And he begins first with the influence of teachers.

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and essentially tells them don't rush to become a teacher because of what they do by what they say.

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Look at what he says there in verse 1, My brethren, let not many of you become teachers. Now he begins with a very familiar and very endearing term, and Paul would do this many times too, throw in there, *al delphos*, which is the term for my brethren, and it kind of softens the tone a little bit, even though the things that are said in that sometimes come across as a pretty stinging rebuke.

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But he does start that way, and using that term is an indication that he's addressing those who name the name of Christ, including those whose faith is genuine beyond question.

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And he's admonishing them to make sure that their desire to teach is fully according to God's will and not their own. Because there are people that rush into something like that and they think after listening to a few preachers that this is what they want to do. And then they jump in there and they find out maybe that is not what he wants them to do.

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It's a lot harder than it looks to stand up here. I got a brother nodding his head there because he spent his life as a pastor.

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And every week, you go through it again. And all the process is getting there. It's, yes, study, and that's the heart of it, but delivery is another art. And standing up here and trying to communicate what you understand. And sometimes words you stumble over. And I have a buddy of mine that's in South Carolina, and we saw him this week. And he pastors a church as well. And we've talked about this many times.

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Sometimes we'll ask each other on Sunday, well, how'd it go? And sometimes one of us will reply back, well, I struggled the whole time. He told me one day, he said, I felt like I was pushing up a hill. Just kept pushing and pushing and pushing. Now, to you, it may not come across that way. It may not sound like that. I even heard John MacArthur say one time, he said, you know, he's been up there struggling and just really trying to to present what God has given to him and the Word and

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And somebody will walk up to him and say, you know, that was the best message I've ever heard. And then he said, then there's other days when you feel like everything's fine and somebody else walks up to you and says, you weren't yourself today, were you? He's like, what?

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The problem too that comes along with this in our culture that we sit there and we rate the speakers. We sit there and judge a lot of things, not just the content of what they're saying,

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but how they say it, the words that they use, how they convey it to everybody. Are they clear or are they obscure? Did they fully explain what they're trying to get across to us? And that right there does become a challenge.

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But right speech is critical.

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And it's a critical mark of true faith. And teachers are held to a higher standard in what they say. And for the obvious reason that what they say exerts a powerful spiritual influence on others.

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When someone asks me a question, I don't take that lightly. I might not know the answer at that moment. I may have to do some research, depending on the question. Or other times, I do know what the answer is. But sometimes it may not come across the way I want it to, or come out the way I intended. And I'm always the type that goes back and rethinks something like that.

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And sometimes I walk away still going, ah, there would have been another way to have said this. A better way. And there's always probably a better way.

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Now when he says here in chapter 3, let not many of you become teachers, the idea of the word teacher may have two possible ideas. One, he may be using this word in a rabbinical sense like rabbi. This is one who had studied the law, he studied the applications of the law to life, and he's engaged in teaching others. Or it may refer to a person who functions in an official preaching, teaching capacity in the church.

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But I want you to understand this. He's not prohibiting anyone from becoming a teacher. What he is prohibiting or restraining is from his readers running recklessly into that role. He doesn't want anyone to embark upon a teaching ministry without any sense of seriousness that's involved. Let me tell you how serious this is. Two times, God said to Ezekiel,

**16:07**

He said, Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Therefore, hear a word from my mouth and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, you shall surely die. And you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life. That same wicked man shall die in his iniquity. And here it is. But his blood I will require at your hand.

**16:32**

Yet if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul."

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You don't think that that is a heavyweight?

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As I said, he repeated this.

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Said it to him two times. God didn't have to say it twice. He's not like us as parents that we tend to do that to our kids. And then we'll even say this, don't you make me say this again. How many times y'all use that?

**17:13**

The writer of Hebrews, he speaks of preachers and teachers and other church leaders, and he says to us in Hebrews 13-17 that they watch out for your souls as those who must give an account. Just like in Ezekiel, Ezekiel was to be a watchman for the house of Israel. Well guess

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what? Preachers and teachers in the church are watchmen for the people of God in the church.

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and they're gonna give an account for you.

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Listen to these words that Paul said to the elders at Ephesus, Acts 20, verse 26. He said, Therefore I testify to you that this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. Now see that's a reference back to what was said in Ezekiel. How are you innocent of the blood of all men? Here's how. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

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Now I want to tell you something here, and I'm not saying this with any boasting or pride, but I have told you everything and I have not held anything back. And I even remember Ron coming up to me, I think it was on Mother's Day, going, wow, I don't think anybody expected that for Mother's Day.

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But you know it's true.

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And I know I'm not invited to places to speak. I'm not really liked on the radio. I mean, we have a radio program. We don't really know the full effects of it. Or internet or any things like that. I mean, sermon gets six listens. You know, I understand that. But my responsibility is not to worry about any of that stuff. Or even to worry about how many people are in this room.

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My responsibility is to declare to you the whole council of God. And my responsibility personally is to evangelize the lost. You know what? Your responsibility personally is to evangelize the lost. I am not the official evangelist. I'm not even an evangelist. I'm a pastor. There's a difference between the two.

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**But we are to declare God's Word. And you have teachers that teach erroneous, misleading, confusing theology. Even like in Timothy's day, he was a pastor at Ephesus. And while he was there, Paul said to him in 1 Timothy 1.3,**

**19:48**

**nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, and from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things that they affirm."**

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**See, some were teaching outright blasphemy. And in that text, verses 19 and 20 tell us that they suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.**

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**When I look over at the writings of Peter, remember we went through the entire book of 1 Peter, and we've also went through that little epistle of Jude. I think in both of those books, they give some of the severest warnings against heretical teachers. Chapter 2 of 2 Peter is directed completely to the subject of false teachers. The epistle of Jude, the entire epistle, is about false teachers.**

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**The idea is that there has to be a warning about them because of their power of influence. Why do you think these false teachers on TBN are so popular? They have a powerful influence and a charismatic mentality or the way that they express themselves. They're very charismatic. And I'm not talking about, you know, denomination here. I'm just talking about the way that they hold themselves.**

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They have kind of like a magnetism about themselves and people are just kind of drawn to them. I mean you have Joel Osteen that fills a former basketball stadium. That's where their church is. But he's a heretic. He's a false teacher. And when he had an opportunity to talk about Christ on national TV, Larry King Live, he refused. Even said he doesn't want to talk about sin.

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because it doesn't fit their theology. They have a word faith theology that basically says if you talk about anything negative in your life then that's gonna happen. So if that's true then you wouldn't want to talk about something negative. But that's not true. Just because you say something negative doesn't mean that that's gonna happen.

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I'm thankful that that right there is the truth. Because again, how many times have you said something that was really bad and you're thankful it didn't happen?

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Especially when someone says, I wish you would die.

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You're right, anybody say that to you?

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So Paul, in those passages, he gave out that warning. James is giving a warning here.

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false teachers because they are careless in interpreting the Word. They're doing it for the purpose of impressing others. They're doing this to bring attention to themselves, not attention to the Word of God, not attention to Christ.

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They bring great danger to the church, and they are also in danger themselves of God.

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There are many teachers that are in the church today, they're poorly grounded in scripture, they're ill-equipped. And I would just say this, that many moons ago when I became a Christian and was involved in Baptist work, been in Baptist work for a long, long, long time, and I also know about the cults and we have them around here. There's a witness right down the road. And I remember when they built the building that they're in, they used to be at this other building, and four days they built that building.

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Four days.

**24:02**

You know what motivated them? A work's salvation. If you're working your way to heaven, then you're going to do everything possible to make sure that you're going to go to heaven. And so whatever is imposed upon you, you'll deal with it and you'll do it. That's what they believe, a work's salvation. They don't even believe in hell.

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But then you have teachers that are in churches.

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and they're really not students of Scripture like they should be. They're not declaring the whole Council of God.

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This is why I believe so much in expository preaching. Why do we have to rush through the Scriptures? Don't we want to understand it? It takes work. I mean, it takes work to study it. It takes work to preach it. But don't you want to make sure that you're interpreting it correctly?

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That you're not imposing something on the Bible that's not there? And then therefore imposing it on your life? That's where legalism comes from.

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You say the Bible says this and it means this.

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But that's not what it means. We always interpret the Bible with a Western view. It wasn't written in America.

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We need to have a Middle Eastern view. We need to understand Jew and Greek. We also need to understand the languages. Hebrew, some parts Aramaic, Koine Greek.

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I don't stand up here and say words and tenses and verbs and all that kind of stuff to impress you. I'm trying to tell you where this will help you in understanding the text. You know, the whole point of understanding 1 John chapter 3 or to understand why he is saying what he's saying comes from the present tense verbs that are all over that chapter.

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And if you don't understand that they're there, then you're going to think, well my goodness, if I'm a Christian now, I'm not going to sin at all. I'll never sin again as a Christian in this life. And I tell people that say that, well, you just sinned. Because you're denying it. You're doing what 1 John 1 said not to do.

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These kind of teachers misrepresent God's word. They do more spiritual and moral damage to God's people than 100 atheists and secularists attacking from outside.

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Well again, James doesn't intend to restrain those who are truly called and gifted by God to teach, those who are genuinely qualified, those who are genuinely knowledgeable and prepared.

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But he does admonish everyone who has an opportunity to teach, to take great pains to consider the seriousness of teaching the Word of God and to make sure that he has an accurate understanding of any truth that he attempts to teach.

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Let me share with you what the view was of the reformers and how they looked at preaching and teaching. And this is the Scottish reformer John Knox. He was so awed and burdened by the responsibility to declare God's Word faithfully that before his first sermon, he wept so uncontrollably that he had to be escorted from the pulpit until he could compose himself.

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When's the last time you saw a pastor responding like that? He steps up in the pulpit, he's shaking, he's in tears, he's...

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because of the gravity of what he's doing.

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I think I know one man, I don't know him personally, but one preacher that really kind of fits a lot of that, and that's Paul Washer.

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You see and hear such passion and even see his tears as he's preaching because he believes what he's saying. And he cares about the people he's preaching to. And he cares about making sure God gets the glory. It's all about God getting the glory. We live in such a way and day that we think more about ourselves than anything. And everything in our life is there to make your life better.

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**28:33**

And you even have Joel Osteen writing a book, *Your Best Life Now*. Well, if you're lost, this is your best life. Because your future isn't pretty at all.

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But our best life is not here. Our best life is in heaven. That's what we long for. If our best life was here, we wouldn't long for heaven. How many times when you go through a trial do you think, oh I just long so much for peace here on this earth and think little about heaven. What gets me through the trial is thinking about heaven. Thinking about the fact that one day

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This will not be going on one day. I will not be going through this.

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One pastor said this, there is no special honor in preaching. There is only special pain. The pulpit calls those anointed to it as the sea calls its sailors. And like the sea, it batters and bruises and does not rest. To preach, to really preach, is to die naked a little at a time and to know each time you do it that you must do it.

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again.

**29:53**

That's what I was talking about a while ago, that once you do it and you have a little bit of a sigh of relief.

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then you're all back in it again.



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**30:06**

I try to rest Sunday afternoon, but I can't always do that. I'm already thinking about next Sunday and all that I need to do to get ready for next Sunday. It takes the whole week and more.

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But I can't step up here on Sunday morning and say, you know, folks, when you come back Monday, I need one more day to be ready. I don't think that would be very helpful to anybody. So James adds here in verse 1, the seriousness of such a responsibility. He does that by mentioning their condemnation is greater. He says, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. A greater, a stronger.

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The word crema for judgment is a noun that's neutral and it can either be positive or negative. And most of the time in the New Testament it's used in a negative way. It's used as a warning. And here it's used in the future tense. So that implies that the judgment in view here is in future. Now future judgment for unbelievers is found in Revelation 20. Future judgment for believers is found in 1 Corinthians 3 at the Bema Seat.

**31:23**

And the kind of judgment that a believer will experience is really chastening in his life. Correction. Rebuke. Admonishing.

**31:35**

And at the BMO seat, that's where you will receive or lose rewards.

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And it says in Romans 14-12 that each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Not for sin. Your sin was put on Christ. He bore your sin in His body. He bore my sin in His body on the cross. Our sins are gone. They've been cast into the sea of forgetfulness. God chooses to remember them no more. He looks at us and He sees Christ.

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**32:12**

We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

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So James is basically saying in verse one, and even as he jumps down to verse two, don't rush to become a teacher because, you know what, teachers can cause people to stumble. And he says there, we all stumble in many things. And the word stumble, it means to trip, to err, to fall. It's a moral lapse, a failure to do what is right. It is an offense to God, so we could really say that this is a synonym for sin.

**32:48**

because it's used that way in chapter two in verse 10. And he also uses it in the present tense which tells us that this is repeated action. It occurs again and again. We all stumble over and over and over.

**33:06**

Craig Keener says that everyone's sin was standard Jewish doctrine, that one of the most common instruments of sin and harm was the human mouth.

**33:17**

But we're all sinners, right? Romans 3 23, all hath sinned. Proverbs 20 verse 9, who can say, here's your mouth, that I have made my heart clean, that I am pure from my sin? Or 2 Chronicles 6 36, there is no man who sins not.

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I think we caught everybody with those three verses.

**33:44**

So if you do not sin in word, then he says you are mature and you're able to control the whole body. Perfect teleos, the word here has two possible meanings. One carries the idea of absolute perfection, being without any flaw or any error. And the second one is being

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complete or mature. Well, if James is talking about the first meaning, then he would have to be speaking hypothetically since no human being but Jesus would qualify for that sort of speech. But if he's speaking of the word perfect meaning complete.

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or mature, then the idea is that a person does not stumble in what he says will give evidence of a purified and mature heart which is the source of righteous speech. And I believe that that's what James is saying here. We could never be perfect in the sense that Jesus is perfect in speech or any other way, but we can in the Holy Spirit's power have a spiritually matured and sanctified heart.

**34:43**

that is expressed through mature, sanctified, God-honoring speech and teaching.

**34:53**

So don't rush to become a teacher because you're going to incur a stricter judgment. But if you are called to be a teacher, then you'll take it seriously.

**35:05**

you realize that there is power and influence with your tongue.

**35:14**

But he says there, if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man. He's able to bridle the whole body. The bridle is that head stall. You have a bridle and a bit, they're used on horses. We have horses. And some of these horses are pretty big. They weigh a lot, 1,200 pounds. You don't want them stepping on your foot.

**35:41**

But everybody that's had a horse has had them step on their foot. Some have been kicked by them. I got kicked one night. One of our horses got out. We're living over here in Ocean Way still. It was about 1 in the morning. My neighbor called me and said, your horse is in my yard. And I thanked her for calling me because they don't have a fenced in yard. I mean, we just had

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our fence. So we went around to get her. And she was enjoying the greener grass on the other side.

**36:08**

and I walked right up to her to get her and she could have really hurt me. She just kicked out enough to hit me, hit me on my thigh, to let me know that she wasn't leaving and you better be careful. Well that didn't work too well for me because it's one in the morning and I woke out of sleep and I'm ready to go back to sleep. The last thing I want to do is fight with a horse or any other animal at that point and that didn't scare me. It actually made me mad.

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And I had her bridle in my hand and I had a lead rope in my hand, went straight to her head and put that bridle on her head and snapped that lead rope on and I took off with her. She didn't get away or anything and you know when you carry a rope you wrap it up. You don't wrap it around your hand, you wrap it kind of like this. Because if they do pull away from you, you want to be able to let go. If your hand's wrapped around it, they're going to take your hand and your arm and everything with you.

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And so we went back around the house, put her back up, went back to sleep. Everything was fine.

**37:17**

James gives an illustration here. When he says in verse 3, if we put the bits in the horse's mouth so that they may obey us, we direct their entire body as well. And so the bit and the bridle, these are ways of controlling such a large animal, but they're small things. A bit is very small. And it goes in the mouth and it presses down on the tongue. And when you want to pull back on it, it pushes down on the tongue, and that doesn't feel good.

**37:46**

That's why a horse will do some of that. And that's why when you ride, you don't ride tight. You just kind of let them rest.

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**37:58**

All of these things are part and partial of controlling the animal. Kent Hughes says this, you can take a 550 pound, as much as a puffing Olympic heavyweight lifter can hoist over his head. You can set it on the back of a horse and it will barely snort as it stands breathing easily under its burden. The same horse, unburdened, can sprint a quarter of a mile in about 25 seconds. A horse is a half ton of raw power.

**38:24**

yet place a bridle in a bit in its mouth and a hundred pound woman on its back who knows what she's doing and the animal will literally be made to dance. And that is 100% true.

**38:40**

So James says.

**38:45**

that if we're doing this with such small things to such large animals to control them.

**38:54**

You need to control this little guy. You can control this. You can control your life.

**39:04**

That's why a fool is counted wise when he doesn't say anything.

**39:09**

The moment he opens his mouth, he lets everybody know he's a fool. Because he says foolish things. Right? So, I'm going to go ahead and say that I'm going to go ahead and say that I'm going to

**39:20**

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David says in Psalm 32, 9, do not be like the horse or like the mule which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come to you. In Psalm 39 and verse 1, he declares or describes using a muzzle on his tongue. He says, I said, I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue. I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle while the wicked are before me. And a muzzle was a thin metal plate put over the lips.

**39:48**

Now let's look at the next illustration, verse 4, look also at ships. Also though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, they are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. Large ships, some ancient ships were very impressive, very large. The merchant ship in which Paul was shipwrecked on, which was going to Rome,

**40:14**

It could accompany 276 passengers besides carrying a load of wheat. Ian Blalack, he notes that the mention of an ancient ship that was said to carry corn enough to feed all Attica for a year.

**40:29**

And then you take the size of a rudder, says it's turned by a very small rudder, that's something that's fastened to the back of the ship, back of the stern. Ax 2740 is the only other occurrence of the term. It's used in the plural to indicate that there were two rudders fixed to that vessel. And then he tells that it's very small, and he uses the word that gives us the superlative of micross. I mean, it's the smallest.

**41:00**

It's the least. And again, the illustrations are to show that something big and powerful can be trolled by something tiny. Something very small.

**41:15**

So it's really telling us the need in our life to exercise control at the crucial points.

**41:27**

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The bit and the rudder have the power to direct, which means they affect life.

**41:35**

Now look at verse five.

**41:39**

Even so, the tongue is a little member. But what's it do? It boasts great things. It's small as the bit in the rudder, and it has power to control. Or, it boasts great things. It's a master control for the entire body, directing virtually every aspect of behavior.

**42:02**

J.A. Moyer, he said, if our tongues were so well under control that it refused to formulate the words of self-pity, the images of lustfulness, the thoughts of anger and resentment, then these things are cut down before they have a chance to live. The master switch has deprived them of any power to switch on that side of our lives. The control of the tongue is more than evidence of spiritual maturity. It's a means to it.

**42:27**

Now James gives no specifics as to what the tongue he says is boasting about. He obviously had in mind man's inclination to boast, to be self-centered.

**42:43**

And whenever and however the tongue boasts, it leaves a wake of destruction. It tears down. It destroys churches. It destroys families. It destroys marriages. It destroys personal relationships. It can even lead to murder and to war.

**43:04**

The tongue, as Psalm 57-4 says, is a sharp sword. Psalm 5-9 says it flatters. Psalm 12-3 says it speaks proud things. Psalm 34-13 says it speaks deceit. Psalm 64-3 says it speaks bitter words. Psalm 78-36 says it speaks lies. Psalm 52-2 says it devises destruction. Psalm 52-4 says it devours.

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**43:32**

Psalm 15.3 says it backbites. 1 Peter 2.1 says it slanders. And Psalm 10 and verse seven says it curses and oppresses and it's full of trouble and iniquity. No wonder Solomon said in Proverbs 18.21 that death and life are in the power of the tongue.

**43:53**

And so in order for the tongue to control our lives in the right way, we must resist that ever-present inclination and temptation to boast and to brag. And we should speak only gracious words, kind words, words that build up rather than tear down, words that edify, words that comfort, words that bless, words that encourage. They should be words of humility and gratitude and peace and holiness and wisdom.

**44:23**

In the words of Ephesians 4:29 and following it says, let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth. This is wretched speech.

**44:36**

If you use cuss words, shame on you.

**44:42**

If when you get upset, and that's what comes out of your mouth...

**44:49**

That's given a great indicator of what's wrong with your heart. Because you're speaking from your heart.

**44:59**

That's not what should come out of your mouth. He says, but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by



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whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking be put away from you with all malice and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ forgave you.

**45:25**

As I said, these kind of words, this comes from the right heart. It comes from a heart that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, a heart that is controlled by the Spirit of God, a heart that is submitting to the Spirit's control.

**45:44**

Every day you are to be filled with the Spirit. Every moment of the day you are to be filled with the Spirit.

**45:53**

Because if you're not filled with the Spirit, what's the opposite? The flesh. You're filled with the flesh. You're doing the deeds of the flesh. And you've got to be careful there because there are many warnings about the flesh stating that if this is what characterizes your life, you are not going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. You're not a Christian. So if you're one that has a filthy mouth, there is good reason to question whether you're really saved.

**46:25**

Told you about a preacher. His name is Mark Driscoll. I don't mind giving his name, because many have, because he's still doing it. You know what his label is? Here's his little nickname that had been given to him. The Cussing Pastor.

**46:43**

What's wrong with that? That's what's going to come out of your mouth? Instead of the word of God?

**46:52**

Do you hear God cussing at us? Do you hear Him telling teachers and preachers to cuss at His people?

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**47:06**

In fact, what I hear, like in Matthew 6, even when you pray, don't be using a lot of words, because it could turn into this vain repetition.

**47:22**

God's not interested in your many words.

**47:26**

He's interested in you going into that secret place and in that secret place you pour your heart out to him.

**47:36**

Prayer should be so much part of your life, just like breathing is. You pray constantly. When it talks about praying without ceasing, it's not talking about walking around with your hands folded and your eyes closed and your mumbling things, like the bruised and bleeding Pharisees running into walls because they're always closed. When everybody thinks that they're spiritual and they're doing all these spiritual things, praying without ceasing means that you have an attitude of prayer all the time.

**48:07**

And you relate everything to the presence of God because you know you're always in the presence of God. So you see an accident on the road and it's saying, you know, sitting there in horror and concern, you can begin to relate that to the Lord. Same with any other tragedy in your life that you experience or witness.

**48:32**

So our question this morning is, what are we doing to control this very small member of the body? What would you have said if you were in that boat and Jesus was in that boat asleep and you wake him up and then he says to the storm, hush.

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**48:51**

What would you have said?

**48:57**

I know what some people would have said and I will never say it to you. I never say it to anybody.

**49:06**

But you've got to guard your mouth, right? Proverbs 21 verse 23, whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles. Are you one who is guarding? Or how about what David said? And David said in Psalm 35, 28, my tongue shall speak of your righteousness and your praise all day long.

**49:33**

Or Psalm 37:30, the mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom and his tongue talks of justice.

**49:42**

So let's speak of his word.

**49:47**

With this kind of tongue, Proverbs 12, 18 says it promotes health. It's good. It's beneficial. It builds up. It blesses.

**50:00**

So let's be a blessing in that way today. As you're around your family, you're around each other, speak those kinds of words. And if you get kind of irritated at what someone says or does, think before you say something. Choose your words carefully. Because once you put them out there, they are out there. And you don't want to spend the next week trying to retract it. Say things you don't have to retract, right?

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**50:28**

**Father, we thank you for this time that we've had together today. We thank you for giving us this privilege. Lord, of being able to worship you.**

**50:41**

**Your name is so worthy of praise. And so we pray now as we conclude this time together that we will take what we've heard and we will apply it to our lives. For those that may be in here this morning that have never truly been saved, Lord we ask that you would open their hearts to you and that you would save them. We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.**