

JAMES – LESSON 6

VI. PRACTICAL FAITH: THE USE AND CONTROL OF THE TONGUE (3:1-12)

- A. The hasty desire to be recognized as a teacher should be tempered (3:1, cf. Matt. 23:7,8).
 - 1. Heavier or stricter judgment is upon the teacher.

- B. Being able to avoid stumbling in word is a characteristic of the perfect man – mature to control the whole body (3:2).

- C. The tongue is small, but powerful (3:3-5a).
 - 1. Small bridles turn big horses – as man wills.
 - 2. Small rudder turns big ships- as the steersman wills.
 - 3. The tongue is a little member that boasts great things.

- D. The tongue is wild and uncontrolled (3:5b-8)
 - 1. It is like a small fire that kindles much wood.
 - 2. The varied potential for evil spreads to all.
 - a. Source or influence of such evil is Hell - set on fire by Hell.
 - 3. While mankind has tamed the animal kingdom, he cannot tame the tongue.
 - a. The tongue remains as a restless evil ready any moment to unleash its poison.
 - b. Full of deadly poison.

- E. From the same mouth the tongue is blessing the Lord and Father and cursing man (3:9-12)
 - 1. This ought not to be.
 - 2. Sweet and bitter water do not come from the same source or fountain.
 - 3. Fig tree cannot yield olives – Vine cannot yield figs.
 - 4. Salt water cannot yield sweet water.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. If we follow James' exhortation, in light of 2 Tim. 2:2,, can we excuse ourselves from teaching?

- 2. What is exactly the problem relating to teaching that James wants his readers to consider?

- 3. Explain why teaching should not be entered into hastily?

4. What is implied in 3:2 about sins of the tongue?
5. In 3:2, define “perfect”?
6. How does man and his tongue relate to the illustrations of bridles and ship rudders?
7. What is meant by the tongue “setting on fire the wheel of nature”?
8. From what source does the defiling tongue receive its power?
How does this source work?
9. What is meant in verse 8 by not being able to “tame” the tongue?
10. How does your answer of question 9, like James’ statement, CONTRAST with what man has done in the animal kingdom?
11. What “ought not” brethren do, which nature “cannot” do?