

God is Interested in Our Words

JAMES 4:11

Subject: Tongue – Careless Babble

In every believer there is something of the saint and something of the sinner, something of the hero and something of the villain.

James has the conviction that nowhere is this revealed more than in the use of the tongue. It is sad, but so often the same mouth that blesses is the same mouth that slanders, curses, maligns, hurts, criticizes, gossips, and is brutal. This should be as unnatural as a stream gushing forth both fresh and salt water, or a bush bearing opposite kinds of fruit. People can speak with perfect courtesy to strangers, and then snap with ungraciousness and irritability to the nearest loved one. They can preach love and gentleness, and yet be impatient and unloving at home with the family.

Men have taught a Bible class with piety on Sunday and then cursed a crew of workmen on Monday. It has not been unknown for women to speak with sweet graciousness at the church meeting, and then go into the community to murder someone's reputation with a malicious, gossiping tongue.

John Bunyan, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells us of "Talkative" – describing him as "*a saint abroad and a devil at home.*" David compares a slandering tongue to three fatal weapons:

- 1.) Razor, extremely sharp
- 2.) Sword, that wounds
- 3.) Arrow, not limited by distance
([Psa.52:2](#); [64:3](#))

The tongue remains hidden for the most part, but when it does make its presence known it can have devastating power. The tongue can express or repress; release or restrain; enlighten or obscure; adore or abhor; offend or befriend; affirm or alienate; build or belittle; comfort or criticize; delight or destroy; be sincere or sinister. The tongue can Xerox the good, or it can X-ray the bad.

God is Interested in Our Words (Continued)

Let's go now to the book of James, chapter three, and note how the Spirit of God uses James to present 6 different word pictures of the tongue to help us see how the tongue is, in reality, very small, but yet so powerful. These are metaphors: *bit*, *rudder*, *fire*, *a dangerous animal*, *a spring*, and *some fruit*.

- I. The first metaphor is the *BIT* that is put into a horse's mouth by a trainer. A very small piece of metal can control a very powerful animal, in fact it presses against the horse's tongue causing him to stop.
- II. *Rudder* – This is a metaphor comparing the tongue to a rudder on a boat; small, but with the ability to control the direction. A small rudder can direct a large ocean liner or even an aircraft carrier and just like the tongue it can control small and large items.
- III. *Fire* – James in [Chapter 3:5, 6](#) uses the subject of fire. (Read) A small spark can ignite an entire forest, so too words that flow from a corrupt mouth can corrupt lives and shipwreck families. James is very strong when he tells us that our tongues are “set on fire by hell” itself. A careless match thrown into dry grass can demolish many homes and destroy the dreams and possessions of hundreds.
- IV. *A dangerous animal* – [James 3:7, 8](#) – the most dangerous animal is the tongue. Please note: ferocious lions can jump through burning hoops, grizzly bears can ride on horses and huge elephants can do handstands, an example of much (not *complete*) control over these animals, but the tongue is presented in the scripture to be like a poisonous viper, snake, cobra, ready to strike. There is no sting of a serpent that does as much damage as a sharp, bitter tongue.
- V. James now presents the 5th metaphor in [James 3:11](#), to help us see that the tongue should not be used both to bless and to blast. *Fresh water flowing from natural springs* will not be both sweet and bitter. It is inconceivable for the tongue to send forth both righteousness and rumors, blessing and blasting, compliments and cursing.
- VI. *Fruit* – The final image is presented in [Chapter 3 verse 12](#): “*My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*” Nature produces after its kind. **JUST REMEMBER THAT GOD IS INTERESTED IN OUR WORDS. WORDS ARE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. JESUS IS THE WORD** – [John 1:14](#) (“*The Word became flesh..*”) God has given us a tongue with which we can present the greatest message to mankind.