

Jesse Nelsen, January 6th, 2012

The Fiery Tongue

James 3:1-12

Introduction:

1. In Context of our last lesson on teachers, James is speaking about the use of tongue by teachers
2. Teachers have a great responsibility but one reason their jobs are harder is because they use the hardest organ in the body to control, the tongue.
3. James is going to be talking solely on the improper use of the tongue; there are many good uses for it.

Discussion:

I. Control of the Tongue (2-4)

A. Great control comes in small packages

1. The one who does not stumble (offend, sin)
 - a. Stumble is the present tense, meaning a continuous action
 - b. The tendency to stumble is more evident in the use of tongue
2. Therefore, James says if anyone does not stumble in words, he is perfect
 - a. Perfect does not mean sinlessly perfect (1 John 1:8) but spiritually mature
 - b. *Teleiov* (perfect)- is used to signify an adult Christian
 - c. One thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel

B. When one reaches a spiritual maturity that enables one to continuously control his speech, then one has mastered self-control

1. Self-Control in the use of the tongues is evident of Self-Control in other areas of the body
2. Sins evident by tongue: lies, deceit, anger, jealousy, cursing, evil thoughts, etc....
3. The way one speaks and uses his/her words can truly show the character of an individual and reveals the deeper "sins" (Matthew 15:18-19)

C. Large horses are controlled by a small bit; Large ships are controlled but small rudders

1. Obey- is *peitho* not *hupokuo* .It means to persuade, a horse is not controlled completely by the bit but it is persuaded to go in different directions by the bit.
2. We direct their body, not control it... The same with the tongue...
3. A ship would go into the direction of the wind, but the pilot steers it in his desired direction.
4. Having control means, not always saying what we want to say but saying what we may not want to say or not saying anything at all. We are in control, not our first response reflex.

II. The Destructive Power of Speech (5-8)

A. It only takes a little spark to start a forest fire.

1. Even though the tongue is little it boasts of great things, this is our arrogance out of control
2. What we say can ruin our reputation which is much bigger and more important than the tongue
3. The Forest itself takes many years to grow, yet one simple small fire can cause it all to end
4. Like our reputation and respect, it takes many years to obtain; one small word can ruin it all

B. Lack of control of the tongue stems from unrighteousness

1. The tongue is a world of iniquity, or the sum of evil because of its incalculable harm
2. Unrighteousness can destroy or change the rest of our life. We cannot escape consequences
3. The tongue cannot be tamed (Hyperbole) Matthew 12:33-37

III. Contradictions of the Tongue (9-12)

A. Do you talk to your mother with that mouth?

1. Many people can bless God with their words but it is much harder to do the same for men
2. One cannot speak evil of God's children without doing so to God- Matthew 25:34-46

B. We cannot say we Love Jesus and not act according to His law

1. We are either a child of God or not –Matthew 7:15-20; John 14:15; John 15:1-11
2. We were not called to unrighteousness but righteousness 1 Peter 1:13-16; Romans 5:18-6:2

Conclusion:

1. We cannot talk like the world and be from God at the same time, James tell us it is impossible!!
2. The tongue can be controlled with the help of the word of God and spiritual living, it takes time and effort
3. As long as we are walking in the light, then we know we are from God and righteousness abounds in our life!