

## Doing Faith

### TAMING SPEECH

*(James 3:1-12) Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 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. 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. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

#### 1. The POWER of Speech

- A. God used speech to bring the world into existence.

*(Genesis 1:3) And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

- B. God gave mankind the gift of speech.

*(Genesis 2:19) The Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them: and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.*

*(Genesis 11:1) The whole world had one language and a common speech.*

- C. God took away some of our power by confusing our speech.

*(Genesis 11:7) Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."*

- D. With my speech I can positively influence my maturity.

*(James 3:2) If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.*

- E. With my speech I can positively influence my destiny.

*(James 3:3-5a) When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 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. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.*

F. With my speech I can positively influence those around me.

*(Proverb 10:11) The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life.*

*(Proverb 15:4) The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life.*

*(Proverb 16:23) Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*

## **2. The PROBLEM of Speech**

*(5b-8) Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

A. Careless speech is beyond retraction.

B. Careless speech is rarely forgiven.

C. Careless speech is never forgotten.

*(Psalm 39:1) I said, "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth..."*

## **3. The PURITY of Speech**

*(9-12) With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brother, this should not be.*

*(11-12) Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

A. Whatever is in my heart comes out in my speech.

B. The idea is not to purify my speech, but to purify my heart.

*(Matthew 5:8) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*