

Audio file

[Study 25 Journeying with James 5326gsm_james_3_v1-9.mp3](#)

Transcript

00:00:00

We'll be turning this morning to the Epistle of James in chapter three, James chapter three verses one to ten.

00:00:11

Let us hear the word of God.

00:00:15

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

00:00:23

For in many things we offend all, if any man offend not in word,

00:00:28

The same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

00:00:33

Behold, we put bits in the horse's mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body.

00:00:40

Behold also the ships, which, though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

00:00:52

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things,

00:00:57

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth, and the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

00:01:04

So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.

00:01:15

For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.

00:01:24

But the tongue can no man tame,

00:01:27

It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

00:01:31

Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

00:01:39

And the Lord will bless His word to our hearts.

00:01:42

Now, our focus this morning will be on verses three to verse six.

00:01:54

James chapter 3, verses 3 to 6.

00:01:58

And really this morning we've entitled the message Controlling the Tongue.

00:02:04

Now I was intending to deal with the whole section here, but there's some helpful teaching and practical instruction even found in these verses.

00:02:16

Now what is the more powerful between the image or the word, between a picture

00:02:23

and between words.

00:02:26

Well, in previous generations, many people would have said the word.

00:02:30

Words are very powerful.

00:02:33

But today, we live in an image-based culture.

00:02:37

And images are impressed upon the mind, and often upon the brain, by bypassing the mind.

00:02:46

Sometimes, we can have an image in our minds.

00:02:51

that we may have seen years and years and years ago, yet it hasn't really left us.

00:02:58

Sometimes they're good images, good pictures, and sadly, sometimes they're bad.

00:03:06

But the words that James is speaking about here are words, and he goes into great detail about the origin of our words, the origin of speech,

00:03:18

the nature of our speech, the color of our speech, the hue of our speech, and the effect of our speech.

00:03:30

That's quite a lot to cover in a few verses, isn't it?

00:03:35

Sometimes our words fail us.

00:03:37

We've all been there.

00:03:40

Perhaps as we get more senior, don't say older, our words begin to begin to miss words.

00:03:48

But other words never leave us.

00:03:52

They leave their mark.

00:03:55

Some words that we remember hearing as children are flavorsome and fragrant and encouraging and sweet.

00:04:04

Sadly, other times the words we remembered were bitter and twisted and crooked and hurtful and damaging.

00:04:15

Now remember who James is writing to.

00:04:18

He's writing to the brethren.

00:04:20

So he's not dealing with the world.

00:04:22

He's not dealing with worldly speech.

00:04:25

He's not dealing with the people of this world who are governed by their own passions and lusts.

00:04:32

He's addressing Christians like you and I.

00:04:38

And so if you remember last week, we saw the awesome responsibility of speech, and we really just took the first two verses, and we looked at what that entailed, the responsibility as preachers, the responsibility as fellow believers.

00:04:53

Then secondly, we looked at the awful tendency to sin with our words.

00:04:59

And we remind you of Paul's description of the words

00:05:06

of a sinful person, of a wicked person, Romans chapter 3:13 and 14.

00:05:12

This is what he says, Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

00:05:17

And that was our nature before conversion.

00:05:23

But this morning we're going to focus on controlling the tongue, controlling the tongue.

00:05:29

And here, James now uses some very helpful illustrations.

00:05:34

Of course,

00:05:36

For James and for his congregation, they would have immediately identified with these images.

00:05:44

For us, in the 21st century, though they might be, we might know about some of these images, we may not see the application.

00:05:55

Or we may even have seen some of these images, but we haven't yet, we didn't understand the application here.

00:06:04

And so what we're going to do is, first of all, controlling the power of the tongue.

00:06:10

And the tongue is a very, very powerful organ.

00:06:15

It's a very powerful instrument.

00:06:18

It can be used for good, and sadly, for evil.

00:06:23

It can be used for building up or knocking down.

00:06:28

It can be used for encouragement,

00:06:32

or it can be used for destruction.

00:06:36

And we're all guilty, one way or the other, of knocking down, of demoralizing, of speaking words that still have an effect upon someone.

00:06:49

And we need, first of all, to acknowledge that, to admit it to ourselves, to the Lord, and repent of it.

00:07:00

Sometimes, even as grown-ups, we can say things to the younger generation and we need to ask for forgiveness.

00:07:09

That's not a weakness, that's actually a strength.

00:07:15

Some of us have had to do it quite a lot.

00:07:19

But let's think about this a little further.

00:07:21

You see, James here uses this word bridle.

00:07:25

In verse two, he says, If any man offend not a word, the same as a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

00:07:35

Now, then he's giving us this image of a horse, because we know that horses wear bridles.

00:07:44

You very rarely see little animals wearing a bridle.

00:07:48

Very strange.

00:07:50

You might see a cat or a dog being walked with a harness, which I have seen recently, even not so far away in a park.

00:08:01

This little animal was wandering along with its owner.

00:08:05

And this little animal looked like a dog from a distance.

00:08:09

But as you walked closer and closer, you saw a long tail.

00:08:12

And you recognize that this was not a dog, but a member of the feline community.

00:08:18

It was a cat.

00:08:20

And this cat was as well-mannered as any dog.

00:08:24

But I spoke to the lady, and she was touring Highlands, and she was from Switzerland.

00:08:29

She came over with her husband, and they were parked up in the camper van.

00:08:33

And she said, I'm quite embarrassed.

00:08:36

when I walk into a park because people see me with this harness and they can't understand how I'm walking a cat.

00:08:43

Well, this cat was very easy to train.

00:08:46

So if you've seen a cat being walked or a cat walking, you'll understand.

00:08:52

But normally, bridles, and invariably bridles, are associated with horses.

00:08:58

And some of us here are much more expert on horses than I would be.

00:09:03

I have ridden a horse.

00:09:05

I've trotted on a horse, but I've never galloped on a horse.

00:09:11

To gallop on a horse takes a lot of horsemanship and a lot of training.

00:09:16

And not everybody can do it.

00:09:19

I've been told that the best way to get a horse, especially in a race, is to ride soft.

00:09:26

I don't know if that's the right term here, but to not sit on the back of the horse, but to, as it were, sit up,

00:09:34

so that you're not weighing down the horse and then you go faster.

00:09:37

I've never done that.

00:09:40

But you see, for James, he's writing to congregations who are quite familiar with this.

00:09:45

Remember, these are from various congregations.

00:09:48

They're scattered in the Roman world.

00:09:50

They would have been very familiar with horses.

00:09:54

But here he used the word bridle.

00:09:57

And I just want you to distinguish this.

00:09:59

The bridle is the whole harness, including the headpiece,

00:10:04

and various aspects of the headpiece.

00:10:06

I believe if you want to get a horse to run in a particular straight direction, you've got blinkers on them.

00:10:13

But that's all part of the harness.

00:10:15

That's all part of the bridle.

00:10:16

It also includes all the attachments.

00:10:19

And then he moves on.

00:10:21

And you see how James does this?

00:10:22

He then moves on to the bit in the horse's mouth.

00:10:26

And that's the part that does the controlling.

00:10:32

The bit is attached to the bridle.

00:10:34

It's got both sides.

00:10:36

It's a little piece of metal.

00:10:40

I know that doesn't sound right, but apparently horses don't seem to mind its metal.

00:10:45

And it's used to direct the horse.

00:10:50

So if you pull on the left side of the horse, on the head of the horse, the horse will turn left, and vice versa, if you want to go right.

00:10:59

But what does

00:11:01

James focus on here he says we put bits in the mouths that they may obey us James of course knows all about horses but he also knows the scriptures of course he does and here we find he's quoting from Psalm 32 and verse 9 now of course

00:11:27

It's not directly from that quote, but that's the theme in his mind.

00:11:31

In Psalm 32, verse 9, Be not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

00:11:44

This Psalm, especially in verses 8 and 9, is about the Lord instructing his people.

00:11:51

James there is taking the bit and the bridle, and he's weaving that into his epistle.

00:11:57

This horse's bit is called, is a Greek term, and this is the only example of this particular form of the Greek term in the Greek New Testament.

00:12:14

Now, apparently, in Edinburgh, there's a great statue of Alexander the Great before he was great.

00:12:24

I'm sure you've seen it.

00:12:26

And I'm sure, if you've seen the statue, you'll notice the horse on which Alexander is sitting, Bucephalus.

00:12:38

And apparently, Alexander's father made a promise, had failed to break this great stallion.

00:12:48

So the king, Philip, said to his son, If you

00:12:54

can break that horse and control that horse, you can keep it.

00:13:03

Not only was Alexander a great general, he was also a great horseman.

00:13:09

But Alexander could not control either his mouth or his lifestyle.

00:13:19

He could control a huge animal, like this great stallion.

00:13:24

but he could not control his passions.

00:13:29

You see, for a little bit in the horse's mouth, that directs the horse's movements.

00:13:37

But even a little tongue in our mouths, we need something greater than a bit of a horse, or a horse's bit.

00:13:46

And then James moves on to a second illustration.

00:13:51

He speaks about a ship.

00:13:53

And here he's not talking about a little ship, he's talking about a great ship.

00:13:57

Not an ocean liner, not a super container ship, not an oil carrier, but something that was suitable to sail in the Mediterranean ocean.

00:14:12

These ships were large for their day,

00:14:17

They could hold a legion, apparently, of soldiers and the captain and the sailing crew.

00:14:26

They could also hold lots of provisions.

00:14:29

So James here is not thinking of a little ship.

00:14:31

He's thinking of a great ship with great sails and oars.

00:14:35

But what does he focus on?

00:14:38

He focuses on one of the smallest parts of the ship.

00:14:42

He calls it here the helm.

00:14:44

We probably know it more as the rudder of a ship.

00:14:49

In previous generations, the rudder was very large, used to steer the ship.

00:14:56

Now you don't actually need a rudder.

00:14:58

There's technology in some of these modern ships that they can turn in very, very, very small arcs in the ocean.

00:15:06

I don't, I'm not an engineer.

00:15:08

I wouldn't be able to give you a description of it, but we have one or two who would know what that's like.

00:15:14

They just do something in the engine and it does some kind of rotation with the motors and they just seem to turn on a very small axis.

00:15:26

But in old times, the rudder was so important that if it broke, you were in real trouble.

00:15:36

You were in real trouble because you couldn't steer anywhere.

00:15:40

And perhaps the most

00:15:42

graphic illustration of this is found in the account that Luke gives us of the shipwreck.

00:15:51

Well, first of all, the storm, Euryclidon, in Acts chapter 27.

00:15:57

And you find that the Apostle Paul and the soldiers, the captain, and the centurion are all caught up in this tempestuous wind, this mighty storm.

00:16:13

And they're running, as it were, he says, Luke records for us, they're running under a certain island.

00:16:22

They're very close to the rocks of an island.

00:16:24

And they were fearful that they might plunge into the quicksands.

00:16:29

And then the storm, the wind and the waves would destroy the ship from behind.

00:16:36

On the third day, I'm picking this up in Acts 27:9, we cast out our hands the tackling of the ship.

00:16:43

We couldn't see the sun, the moon or the stars.

00:16:45

And then I'm just moving down that they were cast upon a certain island.

00:16:54

Of course, the ship had lost all the ship's hands, the captain, even the helmsman had lost all control of this vessel.

00:17:05

But God had not lost control of this vessel.

00:17:09

Although the rudder and all the sails were destroyed, God had a purpose in bringing Saul, Paul the Apostle, to this island.

00:17:24

And you see, for James and his readers, the little rudder was so important.

00:17:31

And also, of course, the helm's man, or here we call the governor, the man who takes control of the helm.

00:17:43

It's not so important nowadays because there's all this technology available.

00:17:49

But nonetheless, and what James is doing here is showing us very clearly with these two illustrations, one from

00:17:56

the equine world, the horse world, the other from the maritime world, the world of sailing and ships, is that there's tiny little instruments that do an awful lot, have an awful lot of power.

00:18:15

And the same with the tongue.

00:18:15

And you may not have seen it like this before.

00:18:20

Our tongues have extraordinary power.

00:18:25

and extraordinary potential.

00:18:29

So the controlling power of the tongue.

00:18:31

And then, moving on to verse 5, a little member, a little member, a little instrument we could use.

00:18:45

What happens if we don't control our tongue?

00:18:48

And the second thing is the destructive power of the tongue.

00:18:53

It's destructive.

00:18:55

And this is why James started with those tiny little, those small instruments.

00:19:03

And sadly, when you read through this passage, you can see, we can see, I can see, how destructive it can be.

00:19:14

James begins with verse 5, Even so the tongue is a little member,

00:19:19

and boasteth great things, behold how great a matter a little fire can lit.

00:19:25

It boasteth great things.

00:19:31

You hear people in the world today and they boast of great achievements.

00:19:36

You hear world leaders and it seems as if they have got there by their own power and yet we know the opposite.

00:19:43

They're only there because God has appointed them for whatever reason and allowed them to stay there.

00:19:50

How quickly these world leaders come and go.

00:19:55

How quickly they're forgotten.

00:19:59

How sorely some of them are remembered.

00:20:02

Some of the greatest speeches have done the greatest good.

00:20:08

Sadly, some speeches have been given and have caused great evil.

00:20:14

And so this picture of the tongue

00:20:18

James moves on.

00:20:19

It's a little member, it's a little instrument.

00:20:22

It's small in our mouths compared to our arms.

00:20:25

compared to our legs, even compared to our brains.

00:20:28

It's quite small.

00:20:30

And yet it's got astonishing power.

00:20:33

And he takes up the picture of a fire, a little fire.

00:20:39

Notice how he puts this.

00:20:41

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

00:20:48

How does a forest fire begin?

00:20:51

Not with a great conflagration.

00:20:54

Not with somebody starting a great bonfire, but often with a small spark, a tiny spark.

00:21:04

Sometimes it's somebody who's left a glass bottle in a dry tinder area in a very hot spell, and that glass is used as a magnifier of the heat and the radiation, and a fire has begun.

00:21:25

A small spark.

00:21:29

Very small spark.

00:21:32

Now, some of us from a previous generation were very, very familiar with open fires.

00:21:38

Some of us had open fires in our own homes.

00:21:41

In the generation to come, nobody will know what an open fire is unless they go to a bonfire.

00:21:47

Maybe you have one of these wood burners at home.

00:21:50

Maybe you use the same as we were told.

00:21:54

But you get newspaper.

00:21:55

Where do you get newspaper today?

00:21:57

Everyone had newspaper in a previous generation.

00:22:00

You had kindling, and then you had a match.

00:22:05

And you put the match on the, you lit the paper, you put the paper, I'm not telling people now to start a fire, please don't, I'm just giving you the instruction, the illustration.

00:22:15

And

00:22:15

You then lit the paper, and it then caught hold of the kindling.

00:22:20

And eventually, you put more wood on top, and then you put whatever fuel we're going to use.

00:22:25

That's how we used to do it.

00:22:26

I don't know whether you did it differently.

00:22:30

But notice it was just one little flame.

00:22:34

And after a few hours, especially if you had one of these old Stanley cookers, it would be-- well, we had this phrase, it would be hopping off the wall, and the pipes too.

00:22:45

Because the heat generated by some of these old Stanleys was astonishing, absolutely astonishing.

00:22:50

But remember, it just began with one spark.

00:22:56

Sadly, if you magnify that, imagine what one spark can do to a dry forest.

00:23:04

We've seen it recently.

00:23:05

Last year, you saw how parts of the Highlands were just aflame.

00:23:11

A wildfire had been started and

00:23:15

Even the emergency services couldn't stop it.

00:23:21

They just banked it down, they just controlled it, but they couldn't stop it.

00:23:29

Not initially.

00:23:32

Sadly, some people have wildfires, sorry, they have wild camping and they leave a smoldering fire.

00:23:42

They don't pour the water on top of it enough.

00:23:45

They don't make sure that all the embers are destroyed, all the ashes are dispersed, and all the little tiny red embers are extinguished.

00:23:58

Think of the devastating wildfires in California just a couple of years ago, or in Greece, or Spain, or wherever you can think of, and it all started with one spark.

00:24:09

The funny thing about fire is it doesn't need to travel on land.

00:24:14

It can jump from one point to the next.

00:24:18

And people don't understand that when they say, Oh, well, it started here.

00:24:23

How can it be over there?

00:24:24

Well, fire, in an astonishing way, the heat becomes a funnel and it allows the fire to catch trees.

00:24:35

And so it is with our words.

00:24:38

Our words can be small sparks, as one old writer calls a great conflagration.

00:24:45

A conflagration, by the way, is an old word for a great inferno, a great fire.

00:24:52

Now, where's one of the wisest men in the Old Testament?

00:24:59

There's a man called Solomon.

00:25:03

And he wrote three books in the Old Testament.

00:25:07

The Song of Solomon, Proverbs, and we believe his final book was Ecclesiastes.

00:25:14

And in Ecclesiastes 10 and verse 13, Solomon says this, The beginning of the words of his mouth, he's speaking here about a fool.

00:25:28

Well, verse 12, The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious, but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

00:25:37

The beginnings of the words of his mouth is foolishness.

00:25:41

The end of his talk is mischievous madness.

00:25:46

So when you hear somebody speaking as a fool, remember Solomon has given us an illustration of them.

00:25:53

He has also shown their true nature.

00:25:57

But James goes a little bit further.

00:26:00

He doesn't just speak about a little spark.

00:26:02

The second image he uses

00:26:04

is he takes this image, and you see how he links them together.

00:26:09

He says, Now, the tongue, verse six, is a fire.

00:26:16

You see what he's done?

00:26:17

He's talked about a little spark.

00:26:20

The tongue is a little member, and a fire is started with a little spark, or a little fire is kindled by a small word.

00:26:30

Well, here he speaks about the tongue is a fire.

00:26:33

It's a whole fire.

00:26:34

And if you've ever been to one of these bonfires, you will see a huge pile of fuel of all kinds of stuff.

00:26:45

Usually it's old pallets and whatever, whatever.

00:26:48

And you see this thing towering over you, and next morning it will be ashes.

00:26:55

But the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

00:27:00

And we're just going to look at each phrase here.

00:27:03

And I'm going to look at them very briefly, but I just wanted to show you what James is really doing here.

00:27:09

It's a world of iniquity.

00:27:12

The word in the original New Testament Greek is the word cosmos, from which we get cosmic.

00:27:21

The cosmos is the whole universe and everything in it, according to the Greek mind.

00:27:30

And this world of iniquity.

00:27:32

James here used this cosmos of iniquity.

00:27:35

It's a whole world.

00:27:36

It's a whole universe.

00:27:39

It's got all kinds of galaxies and planets and solar systems revolving around this world of iniquity.

00:27:49

It's so vast.

00:27:51

That's his point.

00:27:52

He's speaking here about its vastness.

00:27:56

How devastating that is.

00:27:59

Our tongues are a world of iniquity.

00:28:03

The world iniquity there is to do with perversion, corruption, crookedness.

00:28:11

When I was a boy, I learned a nursery rhyme.

00:28:13

There was a crooked man who walked a crooked mile, and he found a crooked sixpence, and I'll have to explain that to you later, what the denomination is today.

00:28:28

He found a crooked sixpence upon a crooked style.

00:28:30

And that, that, dear friends, is the picture of the iniquitous heart and the iniquitous tongue.

00:28:40

It's crooked.

00:28:41

And how little, little we understand in our generation how crooked mankind really is.

00:28:53

The old writers speak about depravity.

00:28:57

They speak about perversion.

00:28:59

They speak about the crookedness and twistedness of the human heart.

00:29:07

And out of that twisted human heart comes twisted words.

00:29:13

We look at this in more detail next week.

00:29:16

But the second thing the tongue does, it's not only a world of iniquity, if that's not enough.

00:29:21

The second thing James says, it is, defiles the whole body.

00:29:28

What's this word defile?

00:29:29

It means to pollute.

00:29:31

It means to make it unclean.

00:29:35

It doesn't just mean to stay in it.

00:29:38

It means to make it polluted.

00:29:41

That's what the tongue does.

00:29:44

It's a tiny little member of our body, of our persons, and yet it can pollute us.

00:29:53

How sobering and searching this is.

00:29:57

Where does the corruption of the tongue come from?

00:29:59

Well, I've already highlighted this.

00:30:01

It's the corruption of the heart.

00:30:03

And it defiles.

00:30:06

And you listen to people who speak with twisted words, or you speak to people who are cursing and swearing all the time.

00:30:13

They are not just polluting their minds.

00:30:17

They're polluting their whole persons.

00:30:22

I long.

00:30:23

Many of the things I've learned over the last 25 years, I had learned as a boy.

00:30:32

That's the words I've said in my unconverted days were corrupt and defiled and iniquitous and polluted.

00:30:42

I didn't realize the damage I was doing.

00:30:46

There's a third aspect.

00:30:48

As if that's not enough, James then goes one more, and he says, It sets on fire the course of nature.

00:30:54

What's he speaking about here?

00:30:57

The word in the original language is the word for wheel.

00:31:01

Revolving, unfolding.

00:31:06

Anyone who's ever seen somebody try to design a wheel, you just mock them, you just laugh at them, don't you?

00:31:16

What's the point in trying to remake the wheel?

00:31:19

If you make the wheel without having this ability to go right round and it has a square section on it, then it's pointless.

00:31:27

I remember having a bicycle that was given to me by a cousin and it had a very strange, well it didn't have a strange rim, it had a damaged rim.

00:31:38

Every time you went over a pretty bumpy part of the road, it bumped you.

00:31:45

Well, that's the idea here.

00:31:46

It's a course of a wheel that's unfolding and revolving and has an effect upon us.

00:31:55

And it goes outwards.

00:31:59

That's what James is speaking about.

00:32:01

It envelops others and other situations.

00:32:07

So we've seen.

00:32:08

The first thing was, it's a world of iniquity.

00:32:11

Secondly, it defies old bodies.

00:32:12

Thirdly, it sets on fire the course of nature.

00:32:15

And fourthly, and probably most searchingly of all, it's set on fire of hell.

00:32:29

James, can you go any deeper?

00:32:33

Can you be any more searching, James?

00:32:37

James here is showing us the source of a tongue that is not honoring, praising the Lord.

00:32:46

Even as sometimes we are known as those who worship and bless God in verse 9, but also we curse.

00:32:54

That's what he's doing here.

00:32:56

He's leading up to this argument.

00:32:58

But this is the central argument James is going to give us.

00:33:03

Who sets the tongue on fire?

00:33:07

Who's the puppeteer, the master puppeteer?

00:33:13

It's not an individual person.

00:33:17

It's Satan.

00:33:20

It's set on fire of hell.

00:33:25

He doesn't mince his words here.

00:33:27

He doesn't become an editor.

00:33:28

He doesn't dilute it down.

00:33:30

He shows exactly where it comes from.

00:33:33

And here's an image from our childhood.

00:33:35

Probably not your child, but mine.

00:33:38

I remember my grandma had this coal fire.

00:33:43

How it ever got going, I had no idea, because I was never there to start it.

00:33:47

But she would always use this wet coal to dry it out.

00:33:52

And this thing called slack.

00:33:55

And it would always be smoldering and smoking.

00:34:00

And you can imagine an old person's house.

00:34:02

It's full of smoke.

00:34:03

The living room is full of smoke.

00:34:07

And you're breathing it in, and you don't even realize it, because you're so used to it.

00:34:13

Anyway, she had this astonishing, ornate, fireside set.

00:34:24

And it involved the tongs and a poker.

00:34:29

There was one other instrument, a shovel.

00:34:33

And you had to use the shovel to put the slack onto the fire.

00:34:39

And the idea was that that would keep it all day.

00:34:45

But how did she get the fire going in the evening?

00:34:48

She didn't use the shovel.

00:34:51

And she didn't use the tongs, she used the poker.

00:34:55

The poker, you poked the fire and eventually

00:34:59

After a while of poking, the flames will begin to gather and you'd have moved away all the damp coal and eventually you'd have a nice warm fire.

00:35:12

So who's poking our tongues?

00:35:16

Who's poking our iniquitous world hearts?

00:35:20

Satan himself.

00:35:24

Satan and his servants are very, very busy.

00:35:30

And that's why we need Christ.

00:35:33

I won't get to where I wanted to get this morning, but that's why we need Christ.

00:35:38

We need Christ to help us.

00:35:40

We need the Holy Spirit to give us those abilities and instruments and even words to overcome this whole world of iniquity, this whole cosmos, this whole defiling nature, this whole

00:35:59

fire of hell.

00:36:02

Satan can be rejected and resisted in the Lord's name.

00:36:09

That's what we need.

00:36:11

I hope it's helpful and practical because what we have here is James giving us very, very practical, experiential, biblical, applicatory truths.

00:36:27

that I trust will help us, not just today, not just tomorrow, not just next week, but right throughout our lives.

00:36:37

Next time we look at taming the tongue.

00:36:41

But do you remember this phrase?

00:36:42

As a boy, I heard this so often, because we didn't have these fancy lighters.

00:36:48

They were for people smoking cigarettes, these lighter things, and they weren't going to share them, so we had matches.

00:36:55

And we didn't have long matches, safety matches.

00:36:58

That was an interesting word.

00:36:59

Do you remember that on the boxes?

00:37:00

Safety matches.

00:37:02

We weren't safe at all.

00:37:05

And our parents and our grandparents knew this, and they said, Do not play with matches, as you might burn not only yourself, but the whole house down.

00:37:16

And so it is with our tongues.

00:37:22

So it is with our tongues.

00:37:24

and how challenging and how searching this is, and yet how wonderful that because we are part of God's beloved family, and because we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we now have the ability, which we never had before, to control our tongues, to have our words seasoned with salt,

00:37:53

to speak of sweet things from these hearts that know and love Christ.

00:38:02

It's not easy, and there are many helps available in Scripture, and we'll look at these next time, to help us in controlling our tongue and taming our tongue.

00:38:14

And what a testimony to the world at large, which cares not what it says, how it says it, and who it says it to,

00:38:22

There are no consequences apparently now, unless your employer reads your social media feed and sees that you've said something that doesn't fit in with whatever values that employer might have.

00:38:37

But how we are accountable to Almighty God, and how we can say and encourage one another with the words we say.

00:38:47

And by the way, we should also use our tongues in prayer.

00:38:50

Even if we're tempted to say something that's hurtful, ask the Lord to help us.

00:38:55

That's just one practical way of controlling our tongues.

00:39:02

Well, we'll come back next week and look at the next section, but let us just briefly pray.

00:39:07

Our gracious God and loving Father, how searching and convicting, how sobering is thy word to us this morning.

00:39:19

Many of us, all of us here, Lord, have said things we regret.

00:39:23

We have said things that have caused hurt and harm.

00:39:27

We have seen something of the nature.

00:39:29

We have seen the origin of those words from our hearts.

00:39:35

But we thank Thee, too, for the Gospel, that in Christ we have been given a new nature, and we now have the ability to control that which once seemed uncontrollable, our tongues.

00:39:48

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the Savior, who redeemed us at Calvary and paid the ultimate price for our redemption.

00:39:55

And we pray, Lord, today that Thou wilt even bless each one here.

00:39:59

And help us, O Lord, and encourage us, and help us to speak words of encouragement, to uplift one another, to be a blessing to one another, to use our tongues for that which pleases Thee, and Thou wilt get all the glory.

00:40:14

We ask, O Lord, that we would make a difference in our generation,

00:40:18

to the people around us, to those we live with and those who we live beside, that we would indeed say the truth and speak the truth in love, and even speak sweet words to those who need help.

00:40:31

Pray for those who are unwell this morning, those who are infirm, and those who need an encouraging word.

00:40:37

May we be able to provide that, even this day, to thy people, to our brethren.

00:40:42

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

