

Can the Tongue be Tamed? James 3:1-12 “Faith Works”

Today we are going to be talking about the most used Muscle in your body

A) **It is working it all the time – THE TONGUE**

B) The average person...that's the **average person**; not the **overly-talkative one** or the **super-shy one**

1) Average person - spends one-fifth of their life talking.

C) If all of our words were put into print, the result would be this.

1) A single-day's words would fill a 50-page book.

D) In a year's time, the average person's words would fill 132 books of 200 pages each. - That's average.

Some of you are like, "Simply not true about me. Not a talker/ wife is nodding – 10yrs – to write four books.

A) Others of you are like – I would fill a Library.

B) The point of this stat is this...we are constantly talking.

1) We talk to ourselves. – My wife – talks to herself a lot – scary – herself starts talking back.

C) I am probably not talking to her enough.

1) All of us – talk a lot! - We talk to ourselves – We talk to others. Yes, texts and tweets do count.

One fifth of your life will be spent with your mouth open. –

A) Not even counting snoring !!!! – Just talking

B) That's a lot of opportunity to **bleed and build up**

1) and that's a lot of opportunity to **curse and tear down**

C) So it should not surprise us that the Word of God would have some things to say about how we use a fifth of our lives, right?

D) It shouldn't be surprising God has an idea, a design for how we use those words.

Now James has already alluded to this back in **James 1:19** So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Swift to hear – slow to speak – Two ears one mouth for a reason - Built in Cage!

A) Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving wordy evidence of that fact. --George Eliot

Winston Churchill – “Eating words has never given me indigestion”

Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it. -- Robert Frost

So James 1:19 has already weighed in on this, but in chapter 3, V.1-12 he gets into it in a deeper way

V.1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. ² For we all stumble in many things.

A) I praise God that that sentence is there. I have it underlined and highlighted in my Bible.

B) One of our theme statements in this study of James has been –

1) The Christian life is about Progress not perfection. – A work in Progress.

C) Learning how to build the muscle of faith – walk with God

The more we progress – the more our Faith is seen

A) One of the biggest places for it to be seen is in our speech. – An area where we all stumble a lot.

B) When I was a Freshman in High School – I was walking out of Church..... High School Counselor/wife

1) I noticed she had put on some weight – stomach was larger – Congrats – when is the baby due?

C) Never made that mistake again: Lost weight.. PROGRESS NOT PERFECTION

1)Not the first or the last time I said something that I regretted – Done that a lot – my wife/ friends/ Pulpit

Not alone: I am guessing – you have too – How many this week... regretted! – Should not have said:

A)Probably not this bad:

A Texas State Trooper pulled a car over and told the driver that because he had been wearing his seat belt, he had just won \$5,000 in the statewide safety competition. The policeman asked, "What are you going to do with the money?"

The Drivers response? "Well, I guess I'm going to go to driving school and get my driver's license,"

"His wife who was sitting next to him in the passenger seat – said Oh, don't listen to him,"
"He's a smart aleck when he's drunk."

This woke up the guy in the back seat, who took one look at the cop and moaned, "I knew we wouldn't get far in a stolen car."

At that moment, there was a knock from the trunk and a voice said, "Are we over the border yet?"

So we all stumble in many things – especially what we say.

If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

³ Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

The Big idea: Words are powerful. With them we bless, we build up; with them we curse, we burn to the ground.

A)In Proverbs 18:21, here's what Solomon says.
"Death and life are in the power of the tongue..."

B)Every year we see examples of this in the news – young people taking own lives – verbal abuse.

C)Words hurt – words can be damaging

1)As kids we learned stupid little sayings that were supposed to help us navigate that sort of thing:

"Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt you."

D)I think the person who wrote that was deaf – couldn't hear – Words hurt – Scar -

Or this one "I'm rubber and you're glue. Whatever you say to me bounces off of me and sticks to you."

E)That's the defense. Those are the coping mechanisms for hurtful words.

Growing up I was teased all the time about having a big Nose-

A)My mom – tried to tell me it was sign of maturity – but that didn't help.

B)Eventually – My Face grew into my nose

1)Bummed out when learned – after 25 everything shrinks except – Nose and ears – TROUBLE

Words are powerful. They can wound or they can heal. They can heal.

A)Warning to teachers - V.1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

B)He is specifically talking about those who are teaching God's word in any form – Pastor Sunday School – Pastor – Home Group leader – Disciple - Stricter judgment -

C)Responsibility to handle the word of God – that should not be taken lightly – Stickler – Content and clarity

D)Applied to anyone who is Speaking into others lives: - All teachers -

Power to do great things:

A)Example: Bit in a horses mouth- ³Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

B)Chayni Chamberlin is a 9 year old Barrel Racer here in America – Amazing – up and coming –

1)Chayni – weighs all of 60lbs – her horse Flojo weighs – 1,000 lbs - -

C) That horse could throw her but she is able to control that beast – with a bit in its mouth.

A ship: ⁴Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

A)Recently went sailing with couple in the church – 36 ft. sailboat

B) And this brother – immediately recognized my seamanship and offered to let me steer –

1)Just kidding – not relaxed the whole time

C)I was amazed – I Barely turned the wheel – that big boat turned – amazing – little rudder

James Point – V.5 the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

A)If it is controlled well, it is effective and wonderful, - Boasts great things

B)Harvest Crusade: 10K saved

1)Martin Luther King – led the civil rights movement not with guns or clubs but with words

C)Charleston NC – Forgiveness –

Simply I love you can make your wives Day!

A)Studies have been done on the power of positive affirmation in a Child's life –

B)Better in School – sports – better in Life Proverb:

E)The tongue is capable of blessing and building up – POWER TO DO GREAT THINGS

ALSO POWER TO GREAT DAMAGE

His third illustration is that of a fire. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature;

and it is set on fire by hell. {Just a spark – deadly, powerful, heavy}

Horrible Fires this year – Northern California – Northwest – Over 7 million acres burned!

A)A little spark – great damage

B)The Great Chicago Fire was started by a cow who kicked over a lantern in a small barn

C)Fire burned for almost 3 days - killed 300 people and left 100,000 people homeless

1)Cost the city \$400 million dollars

D)The tongue is like a fire – great damage!

What comes out of our mouths – Defiles the whole body

A)Ever see a pretty woman – dressed up – really pretty – then she opens her mouth – ruins it – Ugly

B)Think about the Damage that has been done through simple Rhetoric

C)How did Hitler gather the Nazi party and set out to take over the world? He did it with rhetoric Words

There is no great movement in human history that did not have an amazing communicator somewhere in the midst of it,

A)Someone who with rhetorical flair incited fury, patriotic duty, zeal, love, hate.

B)Some of the most deplorable, despicable, wicked imaginable things in Human history – Started with words

1) This was true of the Holocaust. Nazi Germany

This is true even now when it comes to abortion and how we view babies in the womb.

A)Rhetoric - you dehumanize it. Say It's not a person.

B)Sure it has its own heartbeat. Yes it has its own DNA strand. Yes it has its own blood type.

1)Yes, its brainwaves are functioning. Yes, it can feel pain. **But it's not a baby. It's just cells.**

That is the Rhetoric – You dehumanize.

A)Not a baby; it's a clump of cells.

B)It's not a baby; It's a woman's body. It's not a baby; It's a choice.

1)People buy into that - words matter.

D)It's how the Nazi's were able to exterminate so many Jews.

1)It's the reason African Americans in this country were subjected to hatred and inequality for so long,

E)It is how 4,000 babies are aborted in the country every day –

1)America stopped – 3,000 Americans died on 9/11
Pause to commemorate them –

F)Year – 4,000 babies a day - we don't blink an eye!

My Point - Words matter.

A)All highs and lows in human history have somewhere around them brilliant rhetoric.

B)This is what makes Christianity such a true Miracle in world history. – So Unique

C)**Think about how it spread** – The Apostles were unlearned and untrained men – weren't schooled – didn't take speech classes - **Power of the Holy Spirit**

Paul who had a brilliant mind – said – he wasn't a persuasive preacher –

A)The knock on Paul – great letters but – not a great orator

B)And yet God used him powerfully –Paul put it this way: , **"I'm not a good preacher.** I didn't come with wise and persuasive words, **but rather by a demonstration of the power of God."**

C)That is how it spread: God using the very ordinary to do the extra-ordinary – **THEY TURNED THEIR WORLD UPSIDE DOWN**

D)But it was primarily the power of the Holy Spirit

1)Uniqueness of Christianity – **THE POWER IS IN THE MESSAGE** – not the messenger

E)Gospel has the Power to transform a life!

There in lies the secret to our problem with the tongue! - The Dilemma V.7-10

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸ But no man can tame the tongue.

Now James is injecting a bit of comedy into a very serious subject.

A)James is going, "Hey, we can tame a snake and Shamu, but we can't watch our mouths.

B)We can tame any kind of bird, reptile, creature on earth, but we cannot get our tongue to obey us."

C)Dog trainer – Tongue trainer – Horse whisper – Dog whisper – not a tongue whisper

C)Then he goes on from there. ***It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.***

V.8 is an interesting statement:

⁸ But no man can tame the tongue. ESV but no human being can tame the tongue."

A)Because we have moments where **we control** the tongue – You are in a fight with your wife.

B)The words are slinging – you are this – you are that – I don't like you

C)Then the phone rings: how do you answer it?

D)It is not – Hello – how dare you call me in the middle of a fight with my wife –

1)When I am done with her I am coming over to tangle with you – **Oh HELLO MOM**

E)No – answer – hello – hey – not right now –

On your way to church: Fighting with your kids

A)Get out walk in the door – hey bro how is it going – Great PTL – so great to see you – kid is crying

B)Walk into the Sanctuary – singing praise songs

1) James said – **Blessing and Cursing coming out of the same mouth – this should not be**

Yes We can have moments where we control our tongue –

A)But is it possible to come to a place where you are no longer – Destroying others with your mouth?

B)When James says - No human being can tame the tongue.

1)Are we hopeless? – No hope for us ?

C)NO HUMAN BEING – ANSWER IS SPIRITUAL

D)In V. 11-12 James gives us insight into – The solution:

¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh

D)It is all about the source!

A Spring is going to carry either fresh water or salt water depending on it's source

A)If the source is the mountain – snow – Fresh water –

B)But if the source is the ocean - It is going to be salt water.

C)A grape vine is going to bear grapes – why? The source!

D)What comes out of us is going to be connected to what is being poured into us

Jesus put it this way in Luke 6:45 **“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.**

The Heart of the Problem is a heart problem!

A)The More time we spend allowing Jesus to pour into us - DEVOS – SEEKING HIM

B)The more that what comes out of us is going to resemble Him!

C)Some of you don't like that – TOO SIMPLE

1)But it works –

D)Same way the gospel – turned the world upside down – It affects our hearts

Jesus said: John 15 – I am the Vine – you are the branches – Abide in me – words abide in you

A)RESULT – BEAR MUCH FRUIT

B)Fruit – Bible speaks of Love – Joy – Peace
Patience – Self-control – Kindness

C)It is all about the Source!

I have known people who prior to getting saved – they cussed like Sailors – every other word – Fbomb

A)Suddenly after giving their lives to Christ – seeking Him – His word in them.

B)Their speech changed – no effort – GOD THING

C)I lived with a man 20yrs - My Dad – Temper Outburst – Scary.

1)Watched him pour into the word – Read – Cry God's word – **like water on clay** – softening

D)Kindest – gentlest – most caring man I have ever met!

Seen people – So Critical – Arrogant –

A)Become – incredible encouragers

B)That is what Jesus does – when we let him

C)It is all about the Source: What is going into you is going to affect what comes out of you!

James is going to build on this theme in the verses that Follow

A)In V.13-18 – Contrast Worldly Wisdom from Godly wisdom –

B)Key – The source: Self seeking – Worldly

1)Demonic – lie from the pit of hell – all about you.

C)That is your focus: That is the source - what comes out V.16 jealousy – bitter envy.

D)But when we are seeking Him – What comes out is v.17 **pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.**

Continues in Chapter 4 – The Source
Where do wars and fights *come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

The source: - Heart is bad – everything else messed up

A) This whole conversation is heading toward Ch.4:6

God resist the proud but gives grace to the Humble

B) He gives more grace – God's riches at Christ expense

1) God's resources to make up for our lack

C) God's strength in our weakness –

What is the Key to being a recipient of that transforming Grace – HUMILITY

A) We admit – weak – We admit – don't have it in me

B) We cry out – His Spirit – Daily – Lord fill me

C) You know around a Difficult person: Lord you know I don't have it in me

1) Help me – He will

Peter: Talk about a guy who couldn't control his tongue: - Rebukes Jesus Satan

A) Mount of Transfiguration – Good for us.....
Hear Him

B) I will not forsake you - Deny me

C) Peter came to the end of himself – I am a mess

D) His humbling – open the door – Grace -

1) Filled with the Spirit – Changed Man

Peter writes end of his life – final epistle:

A) In his epistles: Holiness – Marriage - End times

B) Exhorts Pastors – condemns false teachers

C) Final Words: Grow – Holiness? Eschatology ?
Grow as Husbands/Wives/ leaders

2 Peter 3:18 grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

No human being can Tame the tongue – but a tongue yielded to Jesus can do – great things

A) **Ballam** – he was an adversary of God – Israel

B) Hired by Balak to curse the people of God

C) Ballam – Got up to Curse – Holy Spirit came upon him and ended up blessing

1) and speaking about the Beauty of the Bride

He was an adversary of God – Under the empowering of the Holy Spirit

A) Imagine what can happen to us who are His friends – we yield our hearts

B) **John the Baptist – I need to decrease – He can increase**

1) Less of me – More of you

C) Jesus is the best thing about any of us