

## **TEACHING TAKES TONGUE CONTROL** **(James 3:1-12)**

### **I. Bits and rudders.**

- A. James starts out by saying that in many things we stumble and help others to stumble.
  - 1. James included himself in this.
  - 2. We have plenty of ways to be tempted in this life.
- B. James then points out that the tongue is the biggest area of weakness for most people.
  - 1. It would take a perfect person to never cause offense with his/her tongue.
  - 2. This is not the word for completion or fullness.
  - 3. Perfect means complete goodness.
- C. If one could perfectly tame the tongue, he could tame his whole body.
- D. He then points out that bits are put in horses mouths and rudders are used to steer ships.
  - 1. The point is, that if we could control the tongue we could control the whole body.
  - 2. A bit allows for control over the horse as the rudder allows for complete control of the ship.
  - 3. Both of them are small but control things much larger than them.
  - 4. The tongue is small, but it controls the body in many ways, instead of the body controlling it.
- E. These are illustrations we all understand.
  - 1. They show the strength of the tongue despite its size.
  - 2. As small as the tongue is it is very powerful.
  - 3. It has the ability to do great things, while containing the ability to cause great harm (illus of great speeches).

### **II. A fire.**

- A. This illustration shows the potential for destruction the tongue has.
  - 1. The ASV has, "Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire."
  - 2. The little tongue can cause a huge blaze of fire.
- B. One thing that is very interesting is that the first set of illustrations show the idea of control, while a fire will burn out of control.
  - 1. Bits and rudders are used to control animals and ships.
  - 2. Fire burns out of control.
- C. The potential for damage caused by the tongue is unimaginable.
  - 1. Paul spoke of a congregation biting and devouring one another through the use of words.
  - 2. Friendships and marriages are ruined every day by the use of the tongue.
- D. James describes it as a world of iniquity.
  - 1. So much harm is caused by improper use of the tongue.
  - 2. It holds more power to sin than the rest of our bodies.

3. Br. Woods said, “were all men suddenly to lose the faculty of speech, the number of sins which men are continually guilty would be sharply reduced.
- E. It is so powerful it can stain the whole body.
- F. It is so powerful it can altar one’s whole life.
- G. The fire that the tongue can cause is only comparable to the fires of hell.
  1. The word “hell” is literally Gehenna and it was a valley outside of Jerusalem where garbage was burned.
  2. The word picture is that the tongue defiles the body and a defiled body is only fit to be burned.
  3. The fire caused by the tongue will lead one to the fires of hell.

### III. **Tame animals.**

- A. I am amazed at the animals that are used in shows.
  1. Grizzly bears, tigers, and all other types of animals have been tamed.
  2. Seeing them in the wild, you would never think such could be the case.
- B. Man has learned how to do such through the years.
- C. However, we can’t tame the tongue.
  1. We have more problems with the tongue than any part of our bodies.
  2. We can control animals, but we can’t control ourselves.
- D. The idea of the picture here is that we don’t keep tame beasts chained up, but we must keep a chain on our tongues.
  1. God is not asking us to do the impossible.
  2. He is not giving us an excuse to sin.
- E. We must be exhaustingly vigilant in watching our tongues because it is restless, seeking to break out.
- F. For instance, we praise God with our mouths and then talk evil about others with the same mouth.
  1. You have probably heard it asked of someone who has just spoken with ugly language, “You kiss your mother with that mouth?”
  2. We are very contradictory in our speech at times.
  3. We will talk glowingly of God and hatefully towards or about those created in the image of God.
- G. We have been told in the past, to ask two questions: is it true and will it be of any good or use to tell it.
  1. We must give great thought before we speak.
  2. Much harm can be avoided by thinking before speaking.
- H. These things should never be and there is no use for them.
- I. James ends this section with two contradictions:
  1. A fountain sending out drinkable and undrinkable water;
  2. Kinds of trees bearing another kind of fruit.
- J. You can depend on a good spring to bring forth good water and you can depend on a fig tree to bring forth figs.
  1. Those who are Christians should be able to be depended upon to

speak right things.

2. This shows the contradictory nature of the tongue.

K. When we give in to evil speaking, we are showing the true nature of hearts.