

Living by Faith VII: James

"Taming the Tongue"

James 3: 1-12

Going Beyond the sermons into the Scripture preached by Pastor Peter Oh on September 24, 2017

Entering In:

*We learned in chapter 1 "to be quick to listen and slow to speak" (James 1:19).
How has this been challenging for you? Share how you have been trying to follow this teaching.*

1. While the text certainly applies to all Christians, who is being addressed in particular in this passage?

Why is what James has to say about taming the tongue especially pertinent to teachers?

What does it mean to *presume* to teach? [cf. 1 Timothy 1:1 – 7, 3:6; 2 Peter 2:1ff]

Does James discourage *us* from teaching in verse 1? Why or why not?

Why should teachers be judged more strictly? [cf. Matthew 18:6]

2. What does verse 2 imply? [Choose all answers you think are true]

- A. Everyone is a sinner in different ways
- B. There can be perfect people in this world.
- C. All people have one common sin, the sin of the tongue.
- D. The sin of the tongue is the worst of all sins.
- E. The tongue is a metaphor representing sins related to speech
- F. Speaking is the most important discipline.
- G. The more we speak the more we sin.
- H. Other

How does *faultless speaking* relate to *keeping the rest of your body in check*?

What is the hardest thing for you to keep in check?

3. What do a bit, a rudder and a tongue have in common according to this passage?

Share your experience of the power of a *positive* tongue to bless yourself or others.

What does James imply by comparing a tongue with a spark (small fire) in verse 5?

4. Some scholars interpret "the whole person (*entire body*)" in verse 6 as "the church."
Do you think that is a legitimate interpretation or not? Explain.

5. If “no man can tame the tongue” (verse 8), then what can we do about controlling our own tongues?

Are *all* tongues “a restless evil, full of deadly poison”?

If this is not true about all tongues, what tongues are not “a restless evil, full of deadly poison”?

How do you personally check whether or not *your* tongue is evil?

6. What are the two things mentioned in verses 9 and 10 that a tongue can do? How are they contradictory?

What kinds of sins are associated with the tongue?

How do verses 11 and 12 reflect Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 15:11?

7. If what you have said hurts someone’s feelings (offends another person), have you necessarily sinned? Give an example of when you have sinned and an example of when you have not sinned by so doing.

How can you avoid sinning against a fellow believer when you are doing the following?

- Giving an admonition
- Expressing your disagreement
- Giving criticism/correction
- Expressing things they don’t want to hear

How might you apply James’ admonition in 1:19 to one of the situations listed in the previous question?

What other Scriptures come to mind as being helpful for when you ought to speak to something that is difficult to address?

8. What are three practical ways to control our tongues mentioned in the sermon? Which is more challenging? Try to come up two more of your person ways.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.

Living It Out:

Pray for healing of those who might have been hurt by your words.

Pray that from now on you may use your tongue to praise God and encourage others.

