

JAMES (LIVE LIKE IT) PART 6 – “TAMING THE TONGUE”

INTRO. WELCOME BACK! WE LIVE IN A CULTURE THAT IS AGAINST JUDGING OTHERS, BUT IS SATURATED WITH RATINGS AND REVIEWS. EVERY TIME WE TURN AROUND ASKED TO RATE PRODUCTS OR EXPERIENCES FROM ONE TO FIVE STARS (HAVE TO ADMIT IT HELPS ON AMAZON). BUT WHAT IF WE ARE TREATING *PEOPLE* IN THE SAME WAY? GOD’S CREATION. WE WOULDN’T BASH A SUNSET, A FOREST, OR AN OCEAN, BUT WE CAN BE HIGHLY CRITICAL AND HURTFUL WHEN IT COMES TO GOD’S HIGHEST CREATION - PEOPLE.

TODAY WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT A VERY PRACTICAL SECTION OF THE BOOK OF JAMES. (HOW TO GET BETTER CONTROL OVER THE THINGS WE SAY. “HOW TO TAME THE TONGUE”) I HAVE BEEN A CHRISTIAN 45 YEARS AND STILL STRUGGLE WITH THIS ONE, BUT AM MAKING PROGRESS, I THINK. THIS IS ADMITTEDLY A TUFF ONE, BUT A TOPIC I THINK WE CAN ALL RELATE TO. . .

- I. JAMES 3:1. Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you**

know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

A. LAST WK. – PRAYER FOR TEACHERS – “MOLDERS OF DREAMS”. TEACHERS WERE OF FIRST RATE IMPORTANCE IN EARLY CHURCH THAT JAMES WRITES TO. WHENEVER MENTIONED, THEY ARE MENTIONED W. HONOR. APOSTLES, PROPHETS WHO STARTED THESE CHURCHES MOVED AROUND – DIDN’T STAY LONG. SO TEACHERS WERE THE ONES WHO HAD THE AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY OF SHAPING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO CAME TO CHRIST. THEIR INSTRUMENT IN DOING SO WAS SPEECH. (NO YOUTUBE CLIPS, POWER POINT, KEYNOTE – NOT EVEN AN OVERHEAD PROJECTOR!)

***NOW IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT WHEN WE OPEN OUR MOUTHS, ALL OF US TEACH SOMETHING – GOOD OR BAD OR NEUTRAL.**

2 DANGERS ALWAYS PRESENT FOR THE TEACHER IN THE CHURCH:

**1. TEACHING OPINION VS GOD’S WORD
“ROWISMS”**

2. CONTRADICTING OUR TEACHING WITH OUR LIFESTYLE (WHY WE ARE PICKY ESP. OF THOSE WHO TEACH OUR KIDS)

***IF A PARENT, YOU KNOW “DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO” DOESN’T WORK.**

****JAMES = ALL ABOUT BEING DOERS OF THE WORD VS HEARERS ONLY. LEARNED LAST WEEK HOW FAITH WITHOUT WORKS TO BACK IT UP IS USELESS OR DEAD.**

***JAMES IS NOT SAYING THOSE WHO TEACH ARE SUPERIOR TO OTHERS, BUT THEIR EXAMPLE HAS FAR GREATER CONSEQUENCES. IF THEY TEACH SOMETHING FALSE OR STUMBLE MORALLY, IT EFFECTS MORE THAN JUST THEMSELVES. THEY WILL BE JUDGED W. GREATER STRICTNESS BECAUSE OF THIS.**

(OLD SAYING: *If you can’t stand the heat, stay out of the limelight.*) CELEBS TODAY DON’T SEEM TO GET THIS. IN THE CHURCH, WE ARE HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD – AS IT SHOULD BE IF WE CLAIM TO BE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.

- II. *JAMES 3:2. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say***

is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

A. IF ANYONE IS ABLE TO CONTROL THEIR SPEECH, PROB. ABLE TO PRACTICE SELF CONTROL IN OTHER AREAS.

SOME MIGHT TRY AND EXCUSE THEIR SPEECH, SAYING WORDS DON'T MEAN ANYTHING, BUT ACCORDING TO JAMES AND JESUS THEY DO!

MATTHEW 12:36-37. But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” (MORE LATER ON THIS)

- **SOLOMON SAYS THAT WORDS = POWERFUL – PROVERBS 15:1-4. A gentle answer turns away wrath,**
- **but a harsh word stirs up anger.**
- **2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge,**
- **but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.**
- **3 The eyes of the Lord are everywhere,**

- **keeping watch on the wicked and the good.**
- **4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life,**
- **but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.**

III. JAMES – TONGUE IS SMALL BUT POWERFUL

IN ITS INFLUENCE JAMES 3:3-6. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 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. 5 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. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

A. A FEW PICS

- 1. BITS/HORSES – MOUTH STEERS DIRECTION OF WHOLE ANIMAL. (THINK ABOUT THE TIME**

AND ENERGY WE CAN SPEND AS A RESULT OF A ONE WORD ANSWER. “YES OR NO”. CAN EFFECT DOING GOD’S WILL OR NOT. OR HOW WE RESPOND TO TEMPTATION THAT CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES FOR YEARS TO COME! JUST THOSE WORDS CAN START A RELATIONSHIP OR CUT ONE OFF; OR DICTATE A CAREER CHOICE OR SCHEDULE.

3 WORDS – “I LOVE YOU” OR “I HATE YOU” SPOKEN BY A SIGNIFICANT OTHER CAN HAVE A HUGE EFFECT ON US.

***IF OUR TONGUES ARE OUT OF CONTROL CAN SHIPWRECK A REPUTATION OR A CAREER. LEADS TO NEXT PIC. . .**

2. RUDDER/SHIP – RUDDER = SMALL COMPARED TO THE SHIP, BUT WITH IT THE PILOT CAN STEER THE SHIP TO SAFETY DURING A STORM, OR IT CAN GO AGAINST THE TIDE AND STEER OURSELVES AND OTHERS TO A BETTER DIRECTION vs CRASHING AGAINST THE ROCKS. RUDDER IS SMALL, BUT INFLUENTIAL FOR GOOD OR BAD IN THE HANDS OF THE PILOT THAT GUIDES IT.

- **SAME W. WORDS. A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT CAN GO A LONG WAY.**
- **PASTOR I HEARD LAST SUMMER – “If you see something, say something.”**
- **BOB BENNET – SONG ABOUT BASEBALL – 3 and 2 life and death, I was swinging with eyes closed holding my breath; I was dying on my way to the bench. But none of it mattered after the game when my Father would find me and call out my name. An ice cream, a snow cone a candy bar. A limousine ride in the family car. He loved me no matter how I played. . .(repeat)**

OUR WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT CAN MEAN SO MUCH AND BRING HEALING. SAME W. INFLUENCE OF OUR FATHER’S WORDS IN HEAVEN – SEE “WHO AM I” ON BACK OF BULLETIN.

- **TOOK A WHILE TO SINK IN FROM HEAD TO HEART, BUT MADE A BIG DIFF. IN MY LIFE AS WELL AS HOW I LOOKED AT OTHERS.**
- **BEST WAY TO COMBAT THE LIE IS WITH THE TRUTH . . .OF WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT ME!**

3. THIRD PIC - A SMALL SPARK CAN IGNITE A WHOLE FOREST ON FIRE AND BRING DESTRUCTION. SO CAN A CARELESS WORD!!

****SHOW PIC OF SOUTHFORK TRAIL.**

*****THIS IS 2 YEARS LATER AND ONLY NOW IS IT OPEN AGAIN SHOWING SOME SMALL SIGNS OF LIFE, BUT IT WILL TAKE YEARS TO COME BACK LIKE IT WAS. ALL STARTED BY A COUPLE OF TEENS GETTING CARELESS WITH A FEW MATCHES AND CIGARETTES BEHIND A WATER TOWER.**

- **“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me”. T or F?**

***BOYFRIEND WHO TOLD HIS GIRLFRIEND HER BUTT WAS TOO BIG. SHE WENT UP INTO HILLS IN MICH. ABOVE THEIR SCHOOL, POURED GASOLINE ON HERSELF AND LIT HERSELF ON FIRE.**

BIG IDEA: SO WORDS HAVE POWER TO BRING LIFE OR DEATH. MUST BE CHOSEN CAREFULLY. SEE WHY JESUS AND JAMES MAKE SUCH A STRONG POINT ABOUT THIS??

IV. JAMES 3:7-8 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

TONGUE = A FIRE THAT CORRUPTS THE WHOLE BODY – IT CAN BE “SET ON FIRE BY HELL”. IT IS A “RESTLESS EVIL FULL OF DEADLY POISEN”.

A. **WHAT’S THE SOURCE THAT FEEDS IT?

*****ACCORDING TO JESUS IT IS THE MIND AND THE HEART. READ **MATT. 12:33-36** “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. 35 A good man brings good things out of the *good stored up in him*, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. 36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.;**

MATT. 15:18-19. But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false

testimony, slander. (YOU GET THE IDEA - WHATEVER IS INSIDE, COMES OUT EVENTUALLY – **GLASS FILLED W. PURIFIED WATER**)

***WHEN UNDER *CHRIST'S CONTROL*, THE MIND AND HEART CAN USE OUR WORDS FOR GOOD. WHEN OUR MIND AND HEART IS CONTROLLED BY A SINFUL, SELFISH NATURE, OUR WORDS CAN BURN AND POISEN. (THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T WANT TO "FOLLOW YOUR HEART" UNLESS CHRIST IS IN CONTROL OF IT!)**

****WHEN CHRIST COMES IN AND COMES FIRST IN OUR LIVES OUR WORDS SHOULD CHANGE! IF SAVING FAITH WE EXPRESS FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT VS FRUITS OF THE FLESH. THAT INCLUDES OUR WORDS!!**

B. TONGUE AS FIRE = COMMON JEWISH PICTURE TAUGHT BY THE RABBIS WHO SAID, The power of life and death are in the tongue.

****UNLIKE A FIST OR A HAND, THE TONGUE CAN WOUND FROM A DISTANCE THROUGH THE PRINTED WORD. (MUCH LIKE PILOTS CAN DROP BOMBS OR FIRE MISSILES FINDING IT EASIER NOT TO SEE THE FACE OF THEIR ENEMIES.**

****WE CAN NOW DO THIS THROUGH FACEBOOK, TEXTING, EMAILS AND BLOGGING. WE GET MORE BOLD WHEN NOT FACE TO FACE, BUT THE PRINTED WORD CAN ACTUALLY HURT MORE AND LEAVE A RECORD OF THE WRONG.**

- **A REPUTATION RUINED BY GOSSIP/SLANDER IS HARD TO WIN BACK ONCE YOU PRESS “SEND”.**

“There is nothing so impossible to kill as a rumor.”

***SOME SCHOOLS THIS YEAR – HAVING KIDS BRING A TUBE OF TOOTH PASTE. (HOLD UP – KNOW WHY?) EASY TO SQUEEZE OUT – KIDS SUPPOSED TO SQUEEZE A LITTLE OUT WHENEVER THEY SAY A NEG. WORD OR INSULT SOMEONE. THEN TRY AND PUT BACK. (GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.) MUCH HARDER TO TAKE BACK. SO SPEAK W. GRACE AND TRUTH.**

****JAMES SAYS - NO HUMAN BEING CAN TAME THE TONGUE! SO WHO CAN??**

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

V. WINNING OVER THE HYPOCRISY OF THE TONGUE JAMES 3:9-12 With the tongue we

praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

A. OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH COME BLESSING AND CURSING. . .DEPENDING ON WHO'S IN CONTROL AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT!

***THE SAME MOUTH PRAISING GOD IN WORSHIP MAY HAVE JUST BEEN USED TO CUSS OUT OUR FAMILY IN THE CAR ON THE WAY TO CHURCH (OR AT LEAST OTHER DRIVERS ON THE FREEWAY!)**

There is an inner battle going on inside of us and our words are a big indicator of who is winning most of the time.

- EVEN THE DISCIPLES WERE NOT IMMUNE.

- **LUKE 9:51-56** As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; 53 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them[b]?” 55 But Jesus turned and rebuked them. 56 Then he and his disciples went to another village. – “SONS OF THUNDER”
- **THE SAME JOHN WHO WANTED TO CALL DOWN CURSES ON A SAMARITAN VILLAGE, LATER WRITES TO THE CHURCHES IN 1 JOHN 3:18 AND SAYS, “LITTLE CHILDREN, LOVE ONE ANOTHER. . .” WHEN LATER UNDER THE SPIRIT’S CONTROL SO. . .**

CONCLUSION:

Deal with what is inside and it will show itself on the outside.

IF A LOT OF CURSING, GOSSIP, SLANDER AND NEGATIVE CRITICISM (VS CONSTRUCTIVE) IS

SPILLING OUT, DEAL WITH THE ANGER, BITTERNESS, UNFORGIVENESS, AND UNGRATEFULNESS INSIDE OF YOU.

- FORGIVE BECAUSE YOU HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN. DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU.

- (IF YOU DON'T DEAL WITH A CUSSING PROBLEM NOW, YOU WILL CUSS AT YOUR KIDS SOMEDAY AND COULD BECOME VERBALLY ABUSIVE WHICH FOR MOST OF YOU IS THE LAST THING YOU WANT!

- INSTEAD, THINK OF CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE. CATCH THEM DOING SOMETHING GOOD AND SAY SO. BE SPECIFIC. - GIVE THEM THE "GIFT OF THE BLESSING"

- WHO NEEDS YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT AT WORK OR SCHOOL THIS WEEK?

****BE FILLED WITH GOD'S SPIRIT MOMENT BY MOMENT (LIKE BREATHING – CONFESS AND EXHALE THE BAD, AND BE FILLED/CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERY AREA BY FAITH.)**

- FOCUS ON **PHILIPPIANS 4:8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is**

excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (A whole list). AND OVERCOME CRITICISM WITH AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE.

- **“IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.”**
- **(HOLD UP GLASS) – WOULD YOU WANT TO DRINK FROM THIS, OR THIS. (POUR IN SALT). ONE WOULD REFRESH ME, THE OTHER WOULD MAKE ME SICK.**
- **REPLACE THE BITTER WITH THE SWEET, AND BE SO FILLED WITH CHRIST THAT HE OVERFLOWS INTO YOUR WORDS AND IF IT HELPS, CARRY A TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE TO SCHOOL OR WORK THIS WEEK!**

PRAY