

Speaking and Tongues

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[0 : 00] So, what are you calling me? I'm just kidding. All right, if you've got a Bible, go to James chapter 3.

James chapter 3. If you're kind of new to the Bible, go towards the very end and work back just a few books and you'll find the book of James. We are in a kind of a little mini-series. We were working through the book of Exodus, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, for several weeks. And then we're taking a break and picking that series back up when we get into our new building. So, this summer, we're kind of in a mini-series called Just Saying, The Power of Words. And what we're essentially doing is we're talking about our talking. We're talking about our talking. We're talking about the words we say, the importance of our words, which is something that we so easily dismiss.

We often think it's really not that important. And yet, the Bible has so much to say about this topic and a lot of important things that address our words.

[1 : 26] Week one, we talked about Proverbs chapter 18, verse 19, that says, death and life are in the power of the tongue. Your words literally are a life and death matter.

Life and death is in the power of the tongue. In Genesis 1, God spoke words and there was life. In Genesis 3, Satan used words and brought death.

The tongue, words, is literally a matter of life and death. Now, last week, we looked at the Apostle Paul's instruction to the church in Ephesus. And he said this, let, say it, no corrupt.

I don't want any corrupt talk to come out of your mouth. But, say it, only what is good for building up as it fits the occasion that it might give grace to those who hear.

Listen, listen. You're Christians. You're a follower of Jesus. That's why we just did a, I choose the Jesus way. I'm not to respond the way the world responds.

[2 : 34] I'm not to use my mouth and use words the way the world uses them. We talked about the fact that we as Christians are not perfect in our behavior. Amen? Okay?

If you are, you should come up here and do this, okay? We're not perfect in our behavior, but we are to be peculiar. We are to be different. We are to be set apart with how we speak.

And so Paul says, listen, if love is what determines the Christian community, then love must be what directs Christian conversation. Your mouth should reflect the kingdom of God.

And we talked about the fact that the gospel or grace represents God's kingdom, but gossip and slander represents the kingdom of Satan. Your mouth represents one kingdom or the other.

Have you been convicted yet? I made you a promise at the beginning of this series that you would be convicted. Anybody not convicted yet? Okay? Just go home, okay, if you're not convicted.

[3 : 34] So if you haven't been convicted, tonight's passage will absolutely get every single one of us. In fact, this passage is from the brother of Jesus. It's from James.

This passage is actually the passage that launched this whole series. One of the ministries that we love to support here at Faith Family is a chapel that takes place at Canterbury.

Paul Allen leads that, and some of you will go and attend a chapel. And I was asked to speak a few weeks ago, and I actually spoke on this passage, and it was this passage that birthed this whole series.

And so there's a lot that God wants to say to us tonight. Are you ready? Ready? Let's do it. Stand if you're able for the reading of God's Word. James chapter 3, beginning at verse 1 down through verse 12.

James, again, the brother of Jesus, says this. Hey, not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with a greater strictness.

[4 : 35] Now, we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

Look at the ships also, though they are so large, they're driven by strong winds, yet guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire.

And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, set on fire by hell.

James, tell us how you really feel, all right? For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue.

[5 : 44] It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. With it, we bless our Lord and Father. With it, we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening, both fresh and salt water?

Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Water. There's so much here. Pray with me. Pray for me. Ask God to come and talk to us tonight.

So Lord, we've been studying this the last few weeks. Come and continue to teach us about the importance of our words, the importance of our tongue, the importance of our mouth, that we would be following the Jesus way and how we speak and how we carry on conversation.

Come and talk to us by your spirit, I pray, to the glory of Christ and all God's people said. Amen.

Amen. You may be seated. Well, back when I was a freshman in college, which wasn't that many years ago, I took a class.

[7 : 03] In fact, it was the very first class and only class I ever took in public speaking. I never took any other class in public speaking. In fact, in seminary, I never even took a class on preaching.

That probably says a lot, doesn't it? But I never did. This was the only public speaking course I ever took. And I will never forget the first day of class. The very first day of class, the teacher walks in, the professor.

There's probably like a hundred college students in this intro to public speaking. And the professor walks out and says, I want you to take out two sheets of paper. And I'm thinking, how do you have a quiz on the first day of class?

We haven't even studied anything. There's nothing to quiz us about, but we did. And the professor said, I want you to take that first sheet of paper and I want you to write on it someone or something that you don't like.

And I want you to place it on the floor. And everybody participates here. On the count of three, we're all going to stomp. One, two, three.

[8 : 07] And you would have thought it was a thunderstorm. There were so many people stomping multiple times. People laughing. I mean, it was just this enormous noise all around the room as people were stomping the paper.

Then she said, I want you to take out the second sheet of paper and I want you to write a specific word on it. Everybody had the same word. And it was the same instruction.

On the count of three, everybody's going to stomp. One, two, three. Silence. Not a single stomp.

No one was laughing. No one was making any noise. Because the word that our professor had told us to write was this one.

And then she looked at that class of 100 college students and she said, what was the difference between the two activities? Same piece of paper.

[9 : 19] Same ink. The only difference was the word. That class is the power of words.

And to this day, I will never, that's the only thing I remember about that class, but I still remember that. Listen, all of us know the power of words.

One word can change everything. One word can set you down an entire different direction. We know how one word, one phrase, you can become immediately filled with emotion.

And that might be a good thing. It might be a bad thing. Words or phrases like, I love you. You look beautiful.

You did such a great job. Son, I'm proud of you. I hate you.

[10 : 21] You're not wanted. These are the power of words. One word. One phrase. And it affects everything about us.

And what we have to understand as Christians, Faith Family, is that the words and the phrases that we use is not a social issue. It is a spiritual issue.

The words you say and how you talk has everything to do with your relationship to God. Our words have power.

That is exactly what James, the brother of Jesus, wants us to understand here in James chapter 3. Now, this is not the first time he's addressed this to his readers.

He's already talked about this back in chapter 1. Now, we noted this as a reference last week, James chapter 1, verse 19. Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear and, say it, slow to speak.

[11 : 23] Slow to anger. And then in chapter 1, verse 26, he says this. If anyone thinks he's religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

So he's already addressed their speech, their mouth, and now he's going to come back to that topic and address it in a much longer detail in chapter 3, verse 1.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with a greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

Now, what James is going to do here is essentially say this. Tongue problems are everybody's problem. There's nobody in this room that doesn't have an issue with this. Amen? Let me try that again.

There's nobody in this room that doesn't have an issue with this. Amen? Amen. We all struggle with this, but he starts by addressing teachers. Now, listen to me, Faith Family. Lean in here, because I cannot tell you how many times I hear this verse quoted completely out of context.

[12 : 35] In fact, almost 10 times out of 10, when I hear someone say, yeah, you don't want to be a preacher, you don't want to be a teacher, they're held to a higher judgment, they're not meaning it in the context of which James means it.

James here is not saying that a teacher's life is somehow to be more perfect than everybody else's, some type of a moral high level. That's not what he's talking about at all.

James is addressing a specific topic. He's talking about your words, your tongue, your mouth, right here. So if you're going to address the topic of words, who might you address first?

I don't know. Those that their primary calling is to speak words. It's a natural place to start. So he wants to talk about the importance of words.

He's going to start with people that talk the most and are in an authority of using their words to influence people. This is even more so the case in the early church, because listen, the office of teacher was so critically important.

[13 : 42] I mean, it's very important today. Amen. Okay. I'm going to go cry. I'll be in the back crying because nobody thinks the office of teacher is important. I tend to think it's really important.

Okay. But we know the office of teacher is important today, but in the ancient Near East, in the time that James is writing, you have to understand that the people that he's writing to, they don't know, they don't, they're not able to understand everything, and they're not fully able to read.

And so they're dependent upon teachers to teach them. And so James is saying, listen, if you're going to be someone who teaches the word of God, you don't need to be flippant about the Bible. If you're going to stand up and use your words about truth, you need to understand you're held to a strict judgment. That's why you need to be very careful to know that this is something you've been called to do.

You've been entrusted with a heavy calling, and you should not take that lightly. That's James's point. When it comes to words, teachers, you carry a high responsibility, and so take that responsibility seriously.

[14 : 51] Now, I think that same principle, everybody still with me? I think that same principle applies to everybody in this room, even if you're not a teacher.

I'm not violating exegetically for a moment what James is trying to say here. Because James is essentially saying, if you're in a particular responsibility or position where your words can influence a lot of people, you need to be very careful how you use them.

Everybody with me? So we could take that and apply it this way to everybody. Listen, parents, be very careful the words you use to your kids.

Because your words carry a weight no one else does. Their friends can say things to them that might hurt them for a day.

Parents, you can say things to them that hurt them the rest of their life. You carry a position of responsibility as parent over your children.

[15:54] Be careful the words you use. Now, I'm going to reverse it. Kids, be very careful the words you use towards your parents. Because, listen, a lot of other people can say things about me, and it bounces right off.

But if my kids say something negative about me, that cuts deeper than anything else. You with me? Older siblings to younger siblings.

A teacher over a class. A pastor over a church. Family members among family members. Here's, here's, if you want to apply this verse to your life, and you're not a, quote, teacher, here's how you would apply it.

Be cautious about the relationships that God has given you, by which you carry a heavier weight. That you can say things to them, that if anybody else said it, it probably wouldn't bother them.

But it's coming from you. And you need to be very careful with your words. It's kind of like this. Let me illustrate it, okay? About 10 years ago, DC Comics tried to reboot Superman.

[17:03] Any Superman fans? Okay, a few of you. They tried to reboot Superman, and they tried to make him attractive to the younger generation. It switched up the original story.

He ended up being unsure about his direction in life. He didn't really know where his life was headed. And then there's this, there's this scene where Ma Kent gives Superman some advice. Here's her advice to Superman. Quote, I don't care what you do. You can play the banjo just as long as you're happy.

Close quote. That's terrible advice. That's the worst advice you could possibly give Superman.

Why? It's not because I'm against banjos.

I'm from Tennessee. I kind of like the banjo. Go play the banjo. No one here is anti-banjo. The thing is, you're dealing with someone who has power. He has power beyond mortal men.

[18:01] Like, listen, he wants to play the banjo. That's fine. He can, like, fly through bullets and stop trains. He shouldn't stop at the banjo.

What he should do is leverage your power for good. Think about Ma Kent's advice in light of Spider-Man, the advice that Spider-Man gets.

Here it is. This guy, Flash Thompson, he probably deserved what happened. But just because you can beat him up, doesn't give you the right to.

Remember, with great power comes great responsibility. Yes! That's good advice. Right?

You're Spider-Man. You've got power, and you need to leverage that power with it. Just because you can do it, doesn't mean you should do it. You ready? Parents, just because you can say it, doesn't mean you should say it.

[19:04] Because you wield a power over your children, and you need to leverage that for good. Don't settle for the banjo.

Really? The banjo? Recognize the power you have with your words. Listen, just because you can say whatever you want, doesn't mean you should say whatever you want.

Amen? Because with great power comes great responsibility. One word can shape perspectives.

One word can impact destinies. One word can change directions.

One word can give hope. Use your words for good. That is James, and what he's saying to teachers, but honestly all of us that are in positions of authority.

Now, James shifts from this, and he acknowledges what we already know, and that is this. When it comes to your words, you're terrible. And I mean that in an encouraging way.

[20:05] You're terrible. Okay? We're not good at this. This is what James says. We all stumble in many ways, but we don't all stumble in the same area.

Some of you stumble with lust. Some of you with greed. Some of you with pride. Some of you with anger. We don't all struggle in the same area except one. And the one area we all struggle in is taming the tongue, the use of our words.

How many of you have ever said, me and my big mouth? How many of you have ever said, I just want to open my mouth and insert foot? I cannot believe I just said that.

What if I told you tonight that I have an audio recording of everything you've said this past month? And what we're going to do is we're going to stop the sermon here, and we're all just going to listen to everything you've said for the last month.

Some of you would be terrified and horrified at this if it were just today, much less the whole month. No one in this room would want anybody else in this room to hear everything you've said.

[21 : 19] Amen? It's because we all stumble in many ways, but in this area, we all fall short. We don't know how to tame our tongues.

We've said things out of anger and hurt and frustration, things we regret, and James now turns from saying, this is an everyone problem to this is a serious problem, verse three.

If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well.

And look at the ships also. Though they're large and driven by strong winds, they're guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. So the second point is, tongue problems are a serious problem.

This is what I've been pleading with you now for the last two weeks. We're into the third week of just saying, you have got to realize how big of an issue this is biblically. It doesn't matter if you think it's not a problem.

[22 : 24] The Bible says this is a real problem and something we need to give serious attention to in our lives. And here's why. James gives us five reasons why this is a serious issue.

This is a problem. This is a thing worth your attention. Number one is this, because the tongue directs. The tongue gives direction. Now to make this point, James uses two illustrations, and both of these illustrations serve to make the same point.

The illustrations essentially say, look at how something small directs something so large. That's the point he's making. And the two illustrations he gives, he begins with a horse.

You take, for instance, a horse, this animal that's like a thousand pounds. I mean, you take this heavy load that a human being could barely even lift or pull, but a horse can pull that with ease.

It is this massive animal, and yet you can control that entire animal with a bit. You can direct that animal wherever you want it to go with the small bit.

[23 : 36] In the same way, think of a ship, this large ship that can withstand waves and wind and raging seas, and yet you can turn that massive ship with a small rudder and direct its entire course.

Do you see James is saying, that's what's true with your tongue. This little member of the body can direct the entire body.

It's a big deal. It's a serious problem. It's worth your attention because it directs your life. One word can change the course of your life for good or for bad, right?

You may get the job that changes your entire vocational direction simply based on what you say in the interview.

You can lose your job with one word. I won't tell you what word that is. There's probably several words that could be in that category. One word, one phrase, you'd be gone tomorrow and change the direction of your life.

[24 : 45] He or she might say yes based on the words you say. You can burn a bridge or you can build a bridge based on the words you use. Listen to me. Your words determine your eternal destiny.

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved.

Your words direct your life. Some of you can remember words that were said father or a friend or a boss or a teacher that set your life on a certain direction.

As many of you know, I like real music. Let me translate that. I'm a Johnny Cash fan. And all God's people said, you don't like that? I don't care. All right?

I like real music. Big Johnny Cash fan. And a story that some of you may know, some of you may not, is when Johnny Cash was a little boy, he was really close to his brother Jack.

[25 : 49] Jack was about two years older than Johnny. And I've heard him give the interview where he was talking about one Saturday morning. Everybody could just tell that something was wrong with Jack.

He wasn't quite right. And so Johnny was begging Jack to go with him to go fishing. He was walking down to the river, actually took two fishing poles, hoping that Jack would go fishing.

But Jack didn't. He believed he was needed at the sawmill. They were cutting logs, and he believed he needed to go work on that Saturday, and he did. Let Johnny go fishing, and he went and served at the mill.

Well, while he was working, Jack was fatally injured. He was cut so bad that he lost his life. And Johnny's father, who loved Jack, it was literally, in all practicality, his favorite son, was so devastated that he took his anger out on Johnny.

And in a moment of rage and anger, looked at Johnny and said, the devil took the wrong son. And those words haunted Johnny Cash the rest of his life.

[27 : 10] Johnny lived a life, almost the rest of his life, until he came to know Jesus later in his life. Lived with insecurity that he could never be enough.

And so much of his whole career was just trying to be someone who was enough. Why? Because of one phrase, said in anger, by his father.

Your tongue can direct your life, or it can set another life off an entire direction. Be careful of the tongue.

Amen? It not only directs, look at verse 5, James then says, so also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire.

The second reason that James says this is a serious issue is because the tongue can destroy. The tongue can destroy. Not only do small things direct large things, that's the first point, but small things can destroy large things.

[28 : 17] You know this. I mean, sometimes the smallest of thing can destroy massive things. And the example that James gives is how one small fire, one match, can set an entire forest ablaze.

It reminded me of a story I read about a 15-year-old boy from Vancouver, Washington, who thought it would be fun. He thought it would be a cool idea to just throw off a few firecrackers in Eagle Creek Canyon.

And in throwing off just a few firecrackers, he set off a fire. And those flames spread so fast, the entire town had to be evacuated.

Major intersections were closed. They destroyed several major tourist attractions. And the judge ordered that young boy to pay \$37 million in damages.

It's just a few fireworks. It's just a match. It's just a word. And by the way, I'm really angry right now.

[29 : 28] And you have no idea how much destruction you can bring. Proverbs says it this way. A worthless man plots evil and his speech is like a scorching fire.

Words can destroy relationships. They can destroy ministries. They can destroy churches. They can destroy testimonies. Be careful the words you speak because they give direction and they can bring destruction.

Amen? You with me? Verse six. Verse six. And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life and set on fire by hell.

Here's the fourth reason why James says this is a serious issue is the tongue defiles. The tongue defiles. That is, he speaks of how the tongue can stain a person.

That the tongue can actually impact your entire life, the entire body. For example, the tongue can stain your entire reputation.

[30 : 46] Don't point. Okay? Don't point. But do you know of somebody that you refuse to tell serious information to because you know they're the kind of person that's gonna tell somebody else?

They can't shut up. And so that tongue, their inability to control their mouth, that inability to stop using their words when they should stop using their words, their inability to be slow to speak has so stained them in your eyes, you won't tell them anything that isn't superficial.

Do you know people that you want, and maybe you are these people, the type of person that no one wants to be around because you're always angry. You're always negative.

You haven't said a kind word in 15 years. Every time something gets brought up, do you know what you always point out? What's wrong with it? You're just negative Nancy, negative Nancy, negative Nancy, and you know what happens?

People don't want to have a relationship with you. Are you getting the point? Your tongue has stained you. Or maybe you're just the type of person that you're just always flying, you know, your mouth is just always moving, and it's just like, you know, listen, right now, that's just not who I want

to be around.

[32 : 06] Listen, your tongue can infect your entire body. It can run your entire life. It can stain you for good or for evil.

You know, the other example is not just giving all the negatives. How about we give some good examples? Are you with me? What if you're the kind of person that's always encouraging? You're going to stain your life in a good way.

Here's how. People, when they're hurting, are going to want to come to you. When you're the kind of person that's slow to speak because you can be trusted, you're a confidant.

Do you know what? You're the kind of person that people will pour their life into. So how has your tongue stained you? And not only will it stain you, your tongue can stain other people.

Let's say you want to talk about something that you shouldn't be talking about. Go back to last week with the issue of gossip and slander. You want to talk about people when they're not around about sensitive information that isn't your business anyways and you invite somebody out for coffee and you share it with them.

[33 : 15] Well, guess what? Now you've stained them. You've brought them into a situation they didn't even ask to be in. And they don't even know what to do with the information. So instead of just staining yourself, you've stained other people.

This is why James is saying this is such a serious issue. You've got to pay attention to the tongue. Jesus said in Matthew 15, it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person.

It's what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person. It stains. Here's the last point, verse 7.

Actually, second to last.

Just kidding. Verse 7. For every kind of beast and bird and reptile and sea creature can be tamed. It has been tamed by mankind. But no human being can tame the tongue.

Here's the fourth reason, or I don't even know what the number is. It doesn't matter. What the other reason is why the tongue is so serious is because it's dangerous. What makes the tongue dangerous is it can't be tamed.

[34 : 19] It can't be tamed. That's James' point. And what's amazing is we can tame almost anything. He talks about how every kind of beast and bird and reptile can be tamed and even has been tamed, but we're not able to tame the tongue.

Think about this. Dogs can be trained to do amazing defense. Canine dogs, military dogs. Dolphins can be trained to do amazing tricks.

Elephants can be trained to twirl hula hoops. That's amazing. That's amazing. Cats can be trained to be worthless. I'm just kidding.

They do that naturally. They do that naturally. You don't even have to train a cat to be worthless. It's just natural. The point is, look at all the animals that we've trained beast and sea creature.

We can train these animals, but we can't control the tongue. You can train an elephant to twirl a hoo-a-hoop, but you can't shut your mouth.

[35 : 26] That's a problem. It's a real problem. And we dismiss it as not a problem. Oh, no, no, no. It's really not a problem. It's not that big of a deal.

It's a real minor issue. It's interesting that you look at an alcoholic who can't control their drinking, and you think that's a problem. You look at the gambling addict who can't control their money, and you think that's a problem.

Yet you look at people who can't control their tongue, and you say, well, that's just their personality. That's the pit of hell.

And those aren't my words. Those are the words of James, the brother of Jesus. And I will assure you of this, faith family, the tongue has destroyed more lives than Jack Daniel's ever will.

The tongue, untamed, is destructive and dangerous. And here's the last one, verse 9. I told you this was going to be heavy, but it's so good. Like, sometimes we don't just want the Word of God to encourage us.

[36 : 41] We also want the Word of God to convict us. Do you know why? Because I need to be more like Jesus, and so do you, and I won't get there without some nails being driven into my life that hurt and conformed me to Jesus.

Amen? So James, bring it on. We need it. Verse 9. Verse 9. With it, that is with the tongue, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. So the second thing, or the next thing we see is the tongue deceives. The tongue deceives.

Have you ever heard the expression, he or she speaks out of both sides of their mouth? That's what James is talking about here. He's like, we do two, listen, listen, I don't have a whole lot more, just about four more pages.

I'm kidding. Listen, we do two things with our mouth we don't stop and think about. We sing praise and slander others with the same mouth.

[37 : 52] We sing praise to God and slander others with the same mouth. And James says, this ought not to be so. Think about it this way, ladies.

How many of you, if your husband walk up to you with a big wad of chewing tobacco in his mouth, okay, big old wad of chewing tobacco, takes a big spit and then turns to you and says, sweetie, can I have a kiss?

I mean, it's just like dripping. I mean, it's like on the beard, all crusty in the side of the mouth and he wants to lay a big old wet kiss on you.

Husbands, what if your wife had been throwing up all night long? I mean the kind with like chunks. There's like gummy bears in there and like M&M; chocolate and sour milk, maybe some cottage cheese.

I mean, it's just, I mean, it's like the nastiest vomiting all night and then turns to you and says, honey, I'd love a kiss. You'd say, that's disgusting.

[38 : 53] That's gross. Why would I want to kiss the mouth that just threw up? How do you think God feels when you walk in here and sing right after you've spent the afternoon slandering?

When you want to pray right after you've just put down? James says, the same mouth that gossips glorifies and it ought not be so.

And do you know why it ought not be so? If I haven't hurt yet, it's going to hurt now, so just go ahead and get ready. Because they're image bearers.

The people you're talking about, the people you're angry with, the people you don't like, bear the image of God.

If you walked in here tonight and I had a picture of my son and I was looking at that picture of my son and I just said, you, I'm talking to the picture, you are the stupidest kid.

[40 : 07] Like, I can't believe, like you just, I'm so mad at you. And I was just saying all, I'm not saying that about my son, but I'm just letting, and you walked up to me and you said, Wes, you got a problem with your son?

And I say to you, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. Caleb, I love Caleb. I don't have any issues with Caleb. He's the best. It's just his picture I can't stand. You'd say, no, it doesn't work that way because that image is connected to a real person.

And to speak that way to his image is to speak that way to him. And yet, we will slander the image bearers of God.

Notice this on the screen, Faith Family, the sinfulness of gossip is not the likability of the person. What makes gossip so sinful is that we're talking to people who've been made in the likeness of God.

Do I say it or do I not say it? I'll say it. Joe Biden is created in the image of God. Donald Trump is created in the image of God.

[41 : 39] Nancy Pelosi is created in the image of God. Your ex-spouse is created in the image of God. The church member who hurt your feelings is created in the image of God.

I am not saying you cannot disagree. I am not saying you can't have conviction. I am saying be careful how you talk about one of God's creatures.

And if your politics can't get past that, you have bigger issues, my friend. We have got to learn in a culture that has lost the ability to have a conversation, to relearn first in the community of Christ how to tame our tongue.

Amen? I'm going to get emails. I'll probably get punched as some people walk out, but I don't care. I use those extreme examples because it's easy to sit at a coffee shop and slander people of a political persuasion, slander people who've hurt us or whatever and forget James is talking about you.

James is talking about me. James is reminding us that gossip and slander doesn't have anything to do with the person. It has to do with the image they've been created in.

[43 : 05] They are in the likeness of God. Here's the last, this really is the last when we're done because I think I've probably made all of you mad, but that's okay. That's okay. Verse 11.

Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Brothers, can a fig tree bear olives? What about a grapevine?

Can that produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. The last point here he talks about is tongue problems or heart problems. In every one of these examples James gets to the source of the problem.

He's saying fig trees, the source, they don't produce olives. Grapevines don't produce figs and so on and so forth. In other words, he's getting at the point we've seen every single week.

We've mentioned this every single sermon, namely, that our words really are not about our tongue, they're about our heart. The words we use really are not about our mouth, they're about our heart.

[44 : 11] Jesus said, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Notice this on the string. Words are just the fumes that are coming from the fire of the heart.

Get that imagery in your mind. The fumes that are coming out of your mouth, well those are just reflective of the fire that's in the heart. It's a deeper issue than just your words, just your mouth. The reason why you speak in anger is because your heart's angry. The reason why you speak about yourself is because the heart is prideful. The tongue in many ways is revealing what's going on in the heart.

for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. And if this is true and it is true because Jesus said it's true, somebody say preach preacher, I'm almost done.

Are you still with me? Do you still love me? You have to, the Bible says so. So here's where I'm at and then I'm laying in the plane.

[45 : 13] Okay, you ready to go gospel? We're going gospel. What I'm left with is this point is simply that I have a heart problem and that's what's impacting my tongue problem.

So that means the only way to tame the tongue is to change the heart. Well, the only one that can change the heart is Jesus.

And this is where we get to the gospel. Listen, listen, the worst thing you could do is leave a sermon like this saying, okay, okay, okay, okay, I'm going to be better with my tongue. I'm going to start watching what I say more.

I'm going to conform my tongue to be more like Jesus. Yeah, that'll last about 30 seconds or until you get on the interstate.

It's not going to work by you trying to change the tongue because you don't change the tongue by changing the tongue. you change the tongue by changing the heart and you can't change your heart. But Jesus can.

[46 : 22] Jesus is in the business of changing hearts. And Jesus can change your heart in such a way that your tongue is conformed to it.

Augustine said this, quote, James does not say the tongue cannot be tamed, only that man can't tame it. God can tame the tongue.

Faith family, here it is right here on the screen. You won't tame the tongue by doing better. You tame the tongue by abiding in Jesus. And as you abide in the vine, his life gets lived through you. the one who lived a life with a tamed tongue begins to live his life through yours. Not by focusing on your mouth, but by focusing on your heart, abiding in the Lord Jesus.

For this, faith family was his life. Look at it. He committed no sin. And there was deceit, there was no deceit found in his mouth.

[47 : 40] In fact, when Jesus was reviled, he didn't revile in return. When he suffered, he didn't threaten.

Here's what he did. He continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. You see, faith family, when the Pharisees were gossiping about Jesus and having their little meetings and talking about things amongst themselves, Jesus didn't return the favor.

When the crowds out of anger were screaming, crucify him, crucify him, Jesus prayed for their forgiveness. When they mocked him and made fun of him to come down off the cross, he remained focused on his mission to glorify the Father.

And as a result, faith family, Jesus died on the cross as payment for your poisonous tongue.

And he and he alone is the only one that can give you victory over it. And all God's people said, amen, amen.

[48 : 59] Lord, thank you. Yes, yes, thank you for this message. It is hard and it hurts, but it is needed if we're going to be like Jesus.

And that's what we want. I hope there is not one person in this room, not a single person in this room that wants to be a better Christian. I hope everyone here wants to be more like Jesus. And if we're going to be more like Jesus, the one who lived the perfect life in every way, but specifically in the area of a tamed tongue, we're going to have to be convicted and conformed to his image.

And so I thank you for passages like this that cut. We think about how your word is a two-edged sword. It does cut. it does convict and it is for our good.

So come great physician and do all the work you need to do in our hearts to conform us more like you.

[50 : 10] Now as we shift our minds now specifically to the cross and we remember how in that moment of great agony, Jesus controlled his words and as we thought about each week those words being Father forgive them they know not what they do.

May we rest in the beauty and the amazement that those words were said to us. In Jesus name, Amen. Amen.