

Series: Redeemed Speech

Message: Taming the Tongue

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Big Idea: We're invited to tame the tongue in order  
to reflect God's transforming power and love to the world.

James 3:1-11

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 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.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 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. 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. 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.

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

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

Questions-

#1. What part stood out most to you in that passage?

#2. Just like a bit and bridle help a horse know where to go, the **Spirit of truth** guides us into all truth, including how we speak. *Your ability to listen and surrender to God's Spirit is the number 1 thing that will affect how you speak.* Are you aware of this process? What's it like for you? Have you ever started to say something and changed it midway because you knew it wasn't healthy and life-giving? Have you been led to step out and speak kindness to others when you normally wouldn't? Or stand up for someone who needed it?

#2. Do you know people who are able to keep their tongues in check and you respect them for it? A family member? A friend?

#3. Are you a “balcony person” for someone? It’s someone cheering on others to do their best, encouraging them to keep going, to trust in God, to have hope as they live each day. (Hebrews 3:13) Who are your balcony people?

#4. Why does James compare our words to a fire? In general, where in our world do you see this playing out? (TV, YouTube, friend groups, at school, in sports, in families)

#5. What are self-destructive words that you hear people tell themselves? How can we be aware of those patterns of speech and take those thoughts captive before they become words? (2 Corinthians 10:5)

#6. Exercise: As disciples of Jesus, we can read his teachings and see how he commands us to speak. Do this as you read Matthew 5-7.

Definition: A life-long journey of experiencing Jesus’ love and sharing it with others.