

PRACTICAL FAITH

A Letter from James



O Be Careful Little Tongue - James 3:1-12

1

INTRODUCTION

- P.S. to last week's sermon (2:24-26)
- chs.2-4 arguably tied together by the theme of speech
- The use of the tongue related to teachers (2:1) and the whole church (4:1)
 - There are more verses given to examples, illustrations, and warnings than any other topic within the book, seemingly indicating this is one of James' greatest concerns for the believers to which he writes
 - He is picking up on the subject he introduced in 1:26
 - It is also connected to the previous section on works that justify

2

A SOBER WARNING

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my siblings, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

3

THE TONGUE...SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL

² For we all *stumble* in many ways.
 And if anyone does not stumble in *what he says*,
 he is a *perfect* man, able also to bridle his whole body.

³ If we put *bits* into the mouths of horses
 so that they obey us,
 we guide their *whole bodies* as well.

⁴ Look at the *ships* also:
 though they are so large and are driven by strong winds,
 they are guided by a *very small rudder*
 wherever *the will* of the pilot directs.

4

THE TONGUE...INCENDIARY AND DEFILING

⁵ 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*!

⁶ 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.

5

THE TONGUE...UNTAMABLE, RESTLESS, AND DEADLY

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird,
 of reptile and sea creature,
 can be *tamed* and has been tamed by mankind,
⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue.

It is a restless evil,
 full of deadly poison.

6

THE TONGUE...BLESSES AND CURSES

⁹ With it we *ble*ss our Lord and Father,
and with it we *cur*se people
who are made in *the likeness of God*.

¹⁰ From the *same mouth* come blessing and cursing.
My siblings, these things ought not to be so.

7

THE TONGUE...DETERMINED BY ITS SOURCE

¹¹ Does *a spring* pour forth from the same opening
both fresh and salt water?

¹² Can a *fig tree*, my brothers, bear olives,
or a *grapevine* produce figs?
Neither can *a salt pond* yield fresh water.

8

RESPONSE IN PRAYER

9
