

James 3: The Weight of our Words

11/23/25 Calvary Chapel Titusville

Pastor Paul Andris

Words and wisdom shape the life and health of the church.

My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (James 3:1 NKJV)

James begins with a sober warning. When we teach, when we speak for God, we must do so with fear and trembling.

"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' " (Luke 17:10 NKJV)

We're just doing our duty.

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. (1 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV)

Stay anchored in the Word.

The teacher's role is not to impress but to represent.

For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he [is] a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:2 NKJV)

The tongue is the thermostat of the soul—it sets the temperature of your spiritual life.

Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. (James 3:3-4 NKJV)

Small things can steer great destinies.

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! (James 3:5 NKJV)

The tongue is small, but its impact is massive.

Your words are not just sounds—they are seeds. They grow into something.

And the tongue [is] a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. (James 3:6 NKJV)

The tongue is not just a fire—it is a world of unrighteousness.

The tongue doesn't just reveal the fire—it ignites it.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. [It is] an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:7-8 NKJV)

The tongue is not just a muscle—it's a mirror

What we need is not just a better filter; we need the power of the Holy Spirit, to change our heart.

With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:9-10 NKJV)

James calls out the contradiction.

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You can't praise God and poison people with the same mouth.

Does a spring send forth fresh [water] and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. (James 3:11-12 NKJV)

Nature teaches us consistency.

"But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:36 NKJV)

Inconsistency in speech reveals instability in spirit.

Who [is] wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct [that] his works [are done] in the meekness of wisdom. (James 3:13 NKJV)

Wisdom is not shown in words but in works.

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. (James 3:14 NKJV)

James exposes counterfeit wisdom.

Selfish ambition is not a personality trait—it's a spiritual cancer.

This wisdom does not descend from above, but [is] earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking [exist], confusion and every evil thing [are] there. (James 3:15-16 NKJV)

There's a type of wisdom that "does not descend from above."

Worldly wisdom builds confusion; godly wisdom builds character.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (James 3:17-18 NKJV)

This kind of wisdom doesn't just fall into your lap. It's cultivated.

It's sown in peace by those who make peace.

Let us live and speak in a way that reflects His grace, His truth, and His wisdom. Amen.