

Date: April 7, 2013

Subject: The Tongue - James 3:8-10

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

James 3:8-10

In the verse before, we read "For every kind [i.e. some of every kind] of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind." Isn't this what makes the circus famous? We see tigers jumping through hoops, elephants standing on little platforms, & seals balancing a ball on their nose. These are truly amazing feats! To watch a man lead about a tiger that is able to tear him to shreds is amazing; but for a man - that is an unsaved man, or woman - ~~the same thing~~ to do the same with their tongue, is impossible!

"But the tongue can no man tame;" Why? Because "it is an unruly evil," akatastatos meaning inconstant, restless, unstable, volatile. Like a volcano that may erupt at any second and destroy all its lava touches,

so is the tongue of every unsaved person. Once they are offended and cannot contain ~~any~~^{any} longer, they erupt into all sorts of filthy language; often regretting after the smoke clears.

"full of deadly poison." The illusion is to serpents that have poison in their mouth, "[the wicked] have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips." (Ps. 140:3). Words can be powerful weapons, and in seconds destroy what took years to build.

"Therewith [i.e. the tongue] bless we God, even the Father;" by giving thanks, singing hymns and spiritual songs, praising God etc. "and therewith curse we men," not being limited to cursings only; but by going from the greater to the lesser: cursing, swearing, arguing, railing, saying "cutting" remarks, lying, flattering for self gain, etc. "who are made after the similitude of God." There are many who say they love God but show by their actions to hate their brother. Such are liars! "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he ~~can~~^{has} seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?" (1 John 4:20)

Therefore whoever hates a man hates God. Man was made in the image of God, so to hate the thing created is to hate the One Who created! "Whoso mocks the poor reproaches his Maker:" (Prov. 17:5).

"Out of the same mouth", hear this! Hear this hypocrisy! "Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing." To see a lion ruthlessly tear apart the belly of a deer would not be pleasant; but to see the same lion after feeding upon the deer and while his face is still stained with ~~the~~ blood, begin kissing the deer's carcass with licks of affection would be preposterous! Yet how many Christians do we see today who sing songs of love to God one minute, and then curse ~~some~~ someone the next? "Jesus loves me this I know... Hey stupid! Why are you driving so slow!"

"My brethren, these things ought not so to be." It shouldn't be this way. It's as though the Apostle James gets down upon his knees and pleads with his brothers and sisters in Christ, "My brethren, think about what you're doing, this isn't what Jesus taught us, these things ought not so to be. We should not be cursing others, only blessing!"

Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Mat. 12:34). The mouth reveals the heart's delight. The mouth speaks in seconds, what the heart considers for minutes; ~~and~~ sometimes hours, or days, even years!

Will you think about that for a minute, beloved? Is it true? Can you think of a time you snapped at someone, didn't you "stew" beforehand? Well how can others eat your cookies when all you cook is burnt garbage in your kitchen!

You are not happy about that, right? You know it's wrong, & you want to change, right? Well there is great hope beloved! Christ has given His Holy Spirit to all those who are trusting in Him. All your life you have become accustomed to reacting a certain way; in order to change your behaviour, you must change your thoughts. The delight of your heart should not be cursings (though they are so easy to produce); rather, you should delight in Christ your Saviour and your continual need for Him. Replace those meditations of cursings with blessings, "bless, and curse not," (Rom. 12:14). In order to make lasting changes, you must remember your position (forgiven

by the grace of God through faith alone in Jesus), and your possession (the Holy Spirit to empower you to change more and more into the image of Christ).

A Case Study

Jim is 39 years old and has been married to Maria for 18 years. They have two children together. Billy just turned 14 and little Anna is 6.

This morning ~~the morning~~ Billy had missed his bus to school and Jim was already late for work. When Maria asked if Jim would ~~be~~ mind taking Billy to school, he let out a long ~~exhausted~~ ^{exasperated} sigh and said, "Fine!"

On his way home from work later that day, he began thinking of how ungrateful his wife had become. "I can't believe she asked me to drop Billy off at school. She knew I was already late, ~~isn't~~ isn't it enough that I work 10 hours a day. Most wives nowadays have at least a part-time job, all she does is sit around the house all day! Must be nice! One thing is for sure, she better be finished making ~~the~~ dinner by the time I get home,

after that I just want to be left alone! God please change my wife! Why can't my wife be like ~~like~~ Tiffany at work. She is so pleasant to be around, she always checks to see how I'm doing, if I need anything. She is a real blessing. God please make Maria more like Tiffany. In Jesus' name I ask. amen."

Questions - ~~Notes~~ Application for Life

1. What will likely happen when Jim gets home?
2. What did Jim do wrong?
3. What should Jim have done instead?

4. What do you think of Jim's prayer?

5. Could Jim's thoughts about Tiffany be dangerous?

6. Think of a time when you last snapped at someone. What did you do wrong? What have you done about it? How will you prevent it from happening again?

The characters in this case study are, of course, fictional; but the events are all too real. The fact is, all of us still struggle with sin, all of us are tempted; yet through it all, God desires for us to grow. These things that happen in our life are meant by God to remove our sinful patterns of life, and to train us to live our life in ways that are pleasing to Him. Remember God's promise through the Apostle John, "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." (1 Jn. 4:4).

God hasn't left you to battle on your own, beloved, you must trust Him and obey Him. Sound like a good idea? May God bless you and encourage you in your walk with Him.

Your friend and servant for Jesus' sake,

Dei T. Uhlen