

## **Sermon Follow-up — July 12, 2020 — James 3:1–12 – “Watch Your Words”**

**Other Scriptures Referenced** — Proverbs 18:21; Matthew 12:36; Ephesians 4:15; James 5:9–12

### **Sermon Recap:**

James wants us to watch our words, we cannot take words back once they have left our mouths.

Matthew 12:36 “On the day of judgment everyone will be held accountable for every careless word they have spoken.”

### **Words are powerful: James 3:1-7**

Words have the power to create life and destroy life. In Genesis God spoke the very universe into being. In the same way our words can create and destroy. We can create intimacy, oneness, and community or we can tear it all down.

### **Words are poisonous: James 3:6-8**

In James 5:12 we learn to not swear, but rather to let our yes be yes and our no be no. Here, James teaches us that poisonous words are untrue words. In James 5:9 we learn to not grumble. James teaches us that poisonous words are unloving words.

### **Words reveal the condition of our heart: James 3:9-12**

In Matthew 12, Jesus tells us that the overflow of our hearts produces the words of our mouth. What is happening in my heart when I talk about people who aren't here, am defensive at all times, gossip, slander, or speak sarcastically?

When James teaches us to watch our words, he is telling us to fix our heart. To fix our hearts we can only go to one place: the cross. On the cross Jesus tells us that the world is sinful, and we see the truth of who we are as sinners in need of grace. At the cross we see a savior who not only acknowledges our sinfulness but acknowledges his love for us by dying for us.

Our words are powerful, and they can be poisonous. We need to watch our words because they indicate what is happening in our hearts. And to fix our hearts we must fix our eyes on the cross.

### **Application Questions:**

- Do you still feel pain or consequences of past injuries caused by untrue or unloving words?
- Have you spoken a careless word this week for which you need to ask forgiveness? Will you commit to go to your brother/sister and ask forgiveness?
- As a bit directs a horse and a rudder a ship, how does your tongue give direction in your life?
- What is going on in my heart when I find myself gossiping? Being critical? Blaming others (Etc)? Where do you need prayer to “fix your heart”? Consider the following prayer:

LORD, as I consider my words, I see they have power to build up and to destroy. Thank you for your Spirit's work to bring true and loving words from my mouth. Yet, I have also spoken poisoned words that are untrue and unloving. These words reveal the lies and lack of love that reside in my heart. My heart is still in great need of your saving grace. I confess that I cannot tame my tongue without Your Spirit, Your love, and the truth of Your word. I truly want to honor You and build others up with my words. Please do in me what I cannot do on my own. Change my heart so that more and more, my words become Your life-giving words. In Jesus name I pray. Amen