

Sunday 22 Nov 2020

Good Morning All,

How blessed we have been with the beautiful rain. Let us praise God today.

Natural Man's Tameless Tongue.

Psalm 140:1-5

Reading James 3:2-12

If you have been to the circus you would remember seeing some animal acts. A trainer would enter with a large cage filled with lions or tigers and would put them through different routines. Maybe there would be an elephant standing on its knees or front legs. We as humans can tame wild animals but we cant control our tongues.

Not only is the the tongue tameless but it is also shameless. It is capable of blessing God on Sunday and cursing people who are made in God's image on a Monday.

Against nature's consistency, this duplicity of the tongue is particularly tragic. No fountain of water brings forth fresh and brackish water. Neither does a fig tree yield olives or a grapevine figs.

The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue we can praise, we can preach, we can say kind loving words, but with the same tongue, we can tell lies that could ruin a person's reputation and break a heart. Since each of us spends the equivalent of ten years talking in our life time, it is of the utmost importance that we submit our tongues to Christ and give Him control over it's use.

1. The Tameless Tongue:

Verse 7 says, "All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man."

The tongue is not only like an uncontrolled fire, it is like an untamed beast. Every type of specie of animals has been subdued or tamed by man. At creation man was given the dominion, "Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." But verse 8 states that the tongue rebels against being tamed- "but no one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." The tongue of man defies all attempts to subdue it and to bring it under control.

The Greek word for tame means to "to overpower, to subdue, to conquer," and was used for bringing oxen under the yoke, of breaking in wild horses and so on. Men can

control great beasts yet cannot control the small tongue. It is an evil incapable of being quieted by man. Worse yet the tongue is full of deadly poison. Psalm 140 verse 3 says, "They make their tongues as sharp as a serpent's; the poison of vipers is on their lips." Like the poison of a serpent the tongue is loaded with venom of hate, of gossips and half truths. You don't have to look far to find victims. It wounds affections, destroys character, ruins peace, and even in some cases it destroys life itself.

Then is the tongue a lost cause? No. God can give us the victory over the tongue. When the tongue is surrendered to God for His use He will give us the ability to control it and use it to His glory. The tongue cannot be tamed by man but can be tamed by God. The Holy Spirit will give us increasing power to watch and control what we say, the more we surrender its use to Him. So that even when we are offended, the Spirit will remind us of God's love and we won't react in a nasty way. When we are criticized the Spirit will touch the hurt and we will find the strength not to lash out.

If the heart is filled with hurt and hate, Satan will fire up the tongue, but if it is filled with love, God will use the tongue to light a fire like that at Pentecost where many were brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. The Shameless Tongue:

Verse 9 Says, "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness." The tongue is just like a Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The positive use involves blessing or praising God. The word bless literally means saying a good word, but in the context of God it means to praise Him with love and gratitude. This is the function of human speech for which the tongue exists. Cursing refers to the abuse of language usually coming from the loss of a temper. It is usually insulting and profane. To curse or wish evil on someone is in effect to curse God Himself. "What you do to the least of these you do unto me." This is because men are made in the likeness of God.

Even though the image of God has been sadly broken and clouded in man's fallen state, James says that man still bears the image of God. This is a strong motivation not to use insulting or profane speech.

A horse is turned around with a little bit a big ship by a little rudder. An inferno is set on fire by a little spark. We all have felt the sting of unkind words.

A Godly Quaker came up to her pastor and said, "Pastor, I think, and wonder if you do also, that if one lived beautifully and walked correctly and stayed away from evil, that others seeing us would be inclined to love our religion?" The pastor replied, "Sister, if you covered yourself with a coat of feathers white as the driven snow, and if you had a pair of wings as shiny as those of the angle Gabriel, there would be

somebody, somewhere so colour blind as to shoot you for a blackbird.” You cannot get away from unkind words. We have all experienced the hurt of unkind words. The same tongue that blesses God can also curse others. Our tongue should not be one of those. It is abnormal for a man to bless God in prayer and praise and yet speak evil of God's Family. Its contrary to God's Grace.

A little girl had her arms wrapped around her fathers neck. He mother saw that over the fathers shoulder she was sticking her tongue out at her brother. The mother immediately told the little girl, “Take your arms from around your fathers neck. You cannot love your father and at the same time stick your tongue out at his son.” To profess to love God while reviling men made in His image is an offence against God.

Dirty words have become common place. Words that years ago were not considered clean have become the norm today. It is common practice now to see them on t-shirts, bumper stickers on TV. It is disturbing to hear non-Christians use this bad language. We shouldn't be surprised as God's Spirit does not live in them and they are not guided by His Word.

What is worse than dirty and impure language from those who profess to be Christians. There are some folk who are exposed to so much swearing at movies DVD and TV networks that they think it is the norm and use it, We can't do much about the language of non-Christians, but we who are Christian must not stoop to the language of the gutter. Let's keep our tongues from evil. A foul mouth is the mark of a polluted soul.

A Forked Tongue:

“Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.” Verses 11 and 12.

The illustration of springs or fountains would have been familiar to the inhabitants of Palestine. Around the Dead sea there are many fountains of brackish, salty, bitter water. Further north of the Dead Sea you will find Springs of fresh, clear, sparkling water. One thing that never occurs in nature is that you will find fresh and bitter water coming from the same spring. The verbal users who think they cut others down and still praise God deceive themselves. Their praises are not genuine.

James concludes his revelation comparing the tongue with an agricultural metaphor in verse 12. “Can a fig tree produce olives or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh water.” The farmers of Palestine produced figs, olives and grapes in abundance. The point is clear, nature is consistent and a believer's tongue should not be an instrument of inconsistency.

The problem of course is not the tongue, its the heart. Matthew 15:18 says, “The

things that come out of the mouth come from the heart and these make a man 'unclean'." Proverbs 4:23 says "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

As we fill our heart with God's word and yield them to the Holy Spirit, He can use us to bring joy to others, and we will be like refreshing fountains and fruitful trees.

Fruit is always marked by what a tree produces. The same family of trees produces the same kind of fruit. Likewise believers words should reflect a family likeness of, the heart of the Father in what they say.

The smallest but largest troublemaker in the world is the tongue. Small but yet so wicked, the tongue must be controlled. In seeking to control our tongues, we must admit to God our weakness daily and seek His help. We must hide his word in our hearts that we might not sin against Him. God's grace can enable us, to use our tongues and our words for wisdom, knowledge, encouragement and blessings. Give God your heart and tongue each day and ask Him to use you to be a blessing to others.

Amen