

Guide your tongue

On our previous devotion, James was challenging his audience and us to respond with visible /tangible faith even in unpleasant circumstances. He will be doing the similar thing even today, challenging us to respond in speech or writing that shows that our heart has been made new by God's grace.

A tongue as small rudder that controls our entire body for better or worse

James uses two illustrations to show us the power of the tongue, a horse for an example which is a powerful and very strong animal with an imaginable speed but it can be controlled by a small thing as putting a bit in its mouth. The second illustration is a ship that is massive but also controlled by the small thing a rudder; James says likewise the tongue is a small member that controls the entire body. By looking at these examples we see that it is a very important member of our bodies that can ruin or prosper our entire lives.

In v6-8, James shows us a devastating reality of this small yet important member of our body, he shows us that it holds an immense power that is witnessed in human beings in being able to tame animals like lions, elephants and dogs; in our history we've seen how powerful speech can change the entire course of human history, here in South Africa everyone remembers Mandela's speech before sentenced for high treason of a dream that he was willing to even die for and his first speech as the president of South Africa, in America that of Dr Martin King Jr "I have a dream. But James shows us that as of this small member of the body as powerful as it is, we as humans are unable to tame it, he says in v5-6 it is like a fire yet so small but able to set the whole forest on fire, it is so corrupt that it corrupts the entire body and destroys the whole of life, how true is that, when we think about it how many people have lost valuable friendships, marriages, families and work. James continues to show us that it doesn't only destroy life here it is of the fire that comes from hell and leads there.

In v9-12, he shows us hypocrisy that comes out from our tongue, that with it we bless the Lord but at the same time we curse the people that are created in the image of the same God that we praise. We are in danger of claiming that we believe in God but yet our actions say something that is totally different; James says this can't be, it cannot be that fresh water and salt water can flow in one spring, it is either you are a born again Christian or you are not, you cannot be stand non the fence. If Jesus has indeed changed our heart, we then therefore ought to expect fruit that shows that; we cannot keep on allowing sin in our lives for that will impact the kind of fruit that we will bear.

Let us guide how we speak by being cautious of what we put in us as that shapes what comes out. Let be aware of the hurt that our speech can cause to others by carefully think about what we say before we say it. In our time of social media let us be careful of what we put out there and post as that can have serious implications on your entire life.

In v2, we see that it not going to be easy, as James assure us that we will make mistakes, but it is for us to recognise our wrong, repent and trust God as He continue to work in us through his Spirit.