



Taming the Tongue in the Body of Christ

James 3:1-21

September 20, 2009

The Christians that James wrote to were apparently having serious problems with their tongues. James had warned them to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (1:19). The believer who does not bridle her tongue is not truly religious (1:26). As one commentator put it, we must speak and act as though we were already facing Christ in judgment (2:12). Imagine the meetings these Christians were having!

The power of speech is one of the greatest powers God has given us. With the tongue, man can praise God, pray, preach the Word, and lead the lost to Christ. What a privilege! But with that same tongue he can tell lies that can ruin a man’s reputation or break a person’s heart. The ability to speak words is the ability to influence others and accomplish tremendous tasks; and yet we take this ability for granted.

In order to impress on us the importance of controlled speech, and the great consequences of our words, James gave us six pictures of the tongue: the bit, the rudder, fire, a poisonous animal, a fountain, and a fig tree.

- **Power to Direct: the Bit and Rudder (1-4)**
- **Power to Destroy: the Fire and Animal (5-8)**
- **Power to Delight: the Fountain and Tree (9-12)**
