

Series: Resilient
Sermon on James 3:1-12

Read James 3:1-12

Three challenges when studying this passage”

1. Pastors and teachers in the spotlight
2. I’m a new Bible reader and this sounds like an in-house conversation.
3. The hopefulness of Christ in this passage shines against the background of one aspect of life EVERYONE struggles with: how we use our words.

James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

James 1:18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...

1. The Redemptive Boast of Disciplined Speech

James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

James 3:2 For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

Two illustrations about small things that control and direct large objects.

James 3:3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 4 Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

James 3:5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

James 1:9 Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, 10 and the rich in his humiliation

Applications

The Christian tongue has one boast.

- For pastors and teachers...
- For congregations and friends...

2. The Revealing Warning of Unrighteous Speech

What we SAY expresses what is in our hearts. Jesus taught this frequently:

Matt. 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Matt. 15:11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”.. Matt. 15:18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person...

James 3:5b... How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

Unrighteous words hurt others and dehumanize the speaker.

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

James 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

James 3:11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

3. The Resilient Heart and Redeemed Speech

Jesus, Paul, James expect that Christians will be resilient IN OUR SPEECH when trials happen.

Jesus: "Luke 6:27 But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either."

Jesus, Paul, James expect that Christians will be resilient IN OUR SPEECH when trials happen.

Paul: "Rom. 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. Rom. 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all."

1 Cor. 4:12 and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure...

Resilient Christians don't bless the Lord on Sunday and curse the Lord's creation on Monday.

How would our marriages, friendships change as Christ builds verbal resilience into my speaking, emailing, texting, liking and tweeting?

How different and positive could our witness in this city but if, under increasing stress for following Jesus we exercised verbal resilience?

92. Away, then, with those prophets who say to Christ's people, "Peace, peace," where in there is no peace.

93. Hail, hail to all those prophets who say to Christ's people, "The cross, the cross," where there is no cross.

- Martin Luther, The 95 Theses