

“Only God Can Shut Yo Mouth”

James 3:1-12

I. Teach if you Must!

- A. **“Not many should become teachers”** — There were those in the early church who sought to be teachers but they were not called by God to be so; their motivation the respect, honor, prestige and financial reward to be gained from the position.
- B. We see the same thing happening today. **Turn on your television and you need not look long to find someone teaching for fame and financial gain.** There are preachers in pulpits doing likewise all over the country this morning.
- C. **It is a serious thing with God to be a preacher or teacher. You should never want to be one unless God has called you; if you are called you will have no choice but to do so.**
- D. **Jimmy Nettles and Patsy** — If you’re called you won’t be able to quit. There will be a fire in your bones to preach the Gospel and you won’t be able to walk away.
- E. **The call to preach or teach won’t go away. If it is from God it won’t let you go. Disobedience to such a call wrecks your peace and leaves one continually dissatisfied with life.**
- F. **I have had older men come to me over the years with the sad tale of such a call left unanswered. “God called me to the**

ministry but I said no in order to pursue more lucrative things.” But the life they chose has left unfulfilled and heart broken over what might have been had they followed God’s direction for their life.

G. **Jeremiah 1:4, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”**

H. **The question is simple, “What has God consecrated you to do for His Kingdom?”** If it is to be a teacher or preacher then by all means run to the call with great faith and excitement! Don’t miss a day of the adventure that is teaching and preaching the Gospel! **But if there is no call...never consider for a moment putting your life somewhere God never meant for you to go...because teaching brings a greater judgement**

I. **We Are All Accountable But Teachers Even More So But You Need Not Be Perfect To Teach!**

A. **“We who teach will be judged with greater strictness”** — A person called to teach will answer such a call with great humility if he really understands the severity and privilege such a call brings.

- B. God holds teachers to a place of special accountability. We are accountable for what we teach *and* how our life backs up the truth we teach.**
- C. All of us are going to face judgement someday for how we lived our life...how we participate in the life of Christ and use the gifts, opportunities and talents He gives us. Teachers have an added judgement.**
- D. **Judgement** — Paul teaches us the specifics of what this “judgement” is in 1 Corinthians 3. We will be held accountable for our works and how we take advantage of the opportunities given us to be a part of God’s work in this life. We will all face such a judgement...Teachers will simply be held to a higher accountability on account of their position.
- E. The tongue has incredible power and nowhere is this seen more fully than in the pulpit or in front of a group of people ready to be taught the Scriptures.**
- F. Words have meaning; they are important. If you are a teacher who denies the authority and perfection of the Bible you’re in trouble.**
- G. **“For We All Stumble in Many Ways”** — James jumps to an **aside for a moment**. Not one of us are perfect. We all stumble. No one must be perfect in order to teach! We must be repentant, not perfect.

- H. There are some who believe the pastor never sins. He lives a kind of surreal and unreal kind of life above the prospects of temptation and failure. James says right here, **“Not so!” We all stumble. Even the greatest of teachers needs a Savior! And he knows this! He repents...seeks Christ and follows Him.**
- I. **The good teacher/preacher understands the power of his words and will seek God and holiness so that he might teach the truth.**

I. Words Have Great Meaning and Power

- A. **“Tongue is small but boasts of great things”** — Our words in themselves have great power for change. They move the hearts. They set the course of the lives of people. There is tremendous power found in our speech to affect the life of an individual and the lives of whole groups of people. **His illustrations of a horse and boat demonstrate the power found here.**
- B. At this point we can move this teaching beyond the preacher/teacher to all of us. We are all called to make disciples...teach the Gospel. We are all called to give the reason for the hope we have in Christ. Are you ready? Do you understand the weight of your words and the responsibility in doing so?**

C. **1 Peter 3:15, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”**

D. There is some responsibility to teach given to all of us. James was simply directing his initial words to those who would desire to have a *ministry* of teaching or preaching and had wrong motives for doing so.

I. In Christ Our Words Can Become Something Wonderful

A. **Everyday we wake up with the opportunity to bless or curse with our words. We encourage or discourage others by what we say. We move others to Christ or become an impediment to their walk with Christ by the things coming out of our mouths.**

B. **“No Human Being Can Tame the Tongue” — In the natural man, apart from God, there is no hope of controlling our tongue and making them a consistent force for good.** James simply says, the tongue is evil. This is for the simple fact that our hearts are born evil and lost. We are all born totally depraved and separated from God.

C. **Our words reflect our character and apart from Christ that character is black and wicked...the words of such a person will**

always be destructive even if they occasionally seem otherwise. The reason is simple...no one can control their words of their own accord.

D. “From the mouth comes blessing and cursing” — My *brothers* this ought not be so! There is another possibility for those who know Jesus Christ. There is a power at work within us that we might avail ourselves of and see both our character and speech become something holy and beautiful

E. In order to uncover the processes that destroy unions, marital researchers study couples over the course of years, and even decades, and retrace the star-crossed steps of those who have split up back to their wedding day. What they are discovering is unsettling. None of the factors one would guess might predict a couple's durability actually does: not how in love a newlywed couple say they are; how much affection they exchange; how much they fight or what they fight about. In fact, couples who will endure and those who won't look remarkably similar in the early days. Yet when psychologists Cliff Notarius of Catholic University and Howard Markman of the University of Denver studied newlyweds over the first decade of marriage, they found a very subtle but telling difference at the beginning of the relationships. Among couples who would ultimately stay together, 5 out of every 100

comments made about each other were putdowns. Among couples who would later split, 10 of every 100 comments were insults. That gap magnified over the following decade, until couples heading downhill were flinging five times as many cruel and invalidating comments at each other as happy couples. "Hostile putdowns act as cancerous cells that, if unchecked, erode the relationship over time," says Notarius, who with Markman co-authored the new book We Can Work It Out. "In the end, relentless unremitting negativity takes control and the couple can't get through a week without major blowups."

- F. Good things, blessings, encouraging speech should be the natural language on the lips of those who belong to Christ. We need not be like we once were...we are now in Christ and we cannot or should not bless our Lord with one breath and curse a brother or even a lost person in the next.
- G. Seeing the opportunity our speech gives...how can we not open our mouths to bless???

I. Conclusion

- A. Are you called to teach? Make sure your call to do so is from God not mama, self or someone else.

- B.** Don't be afraid if God has called you. God gives special grace to those who will face special judgement. If you answer His call and lean on Him He will be sufficient so that the judgement you face will be for the reward of a life and ministry well lived.
- C.** To reject God's call on your life is to live a life of frustration and misery.