



MONDAY 09 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:1-2 [3:1-6]

Plug In...

For those joining *The Lakes Daily Bible Reading Email* as of today, we are working our way through the letter James until we resume Matthew's Gospel at The Lakes.

James' letter shows he is deeply concerned the impact of worldly living has on the life of the Christian community. Here in chapter 3, James holds the mirror up to us over our speech (remember the three test of genuine faith 1:26-27). This is an appropriate test. The book of Proverbs singles out that speech habits are markers of godliness (e.g., Proverbs 10:8, 11, 21). James writes in a context, presumably, where many *too quickly* step up to be teachers and leaders of God's people. As they clamour for position, James pours some cold water (or shall we say hot water): "Stricter judgement". This gives the 'enthusiastic' pause. The main tool in the teacher's toolbox is their 'speech' and we'll learn it is the hardest part of the body to control.

Chew It Over...

Many of us are in teaching positions within *The Lakes*, within our families. At one level, we all actively teach each other (Colossians 3:16), but in the case of anything formal one should recognise their vulnerability in that position. Vulnerable because we possess a tongue. As many of us engage in teaching and leading in one way or another throughout this week, *Good News Week*, we'll bump into one another, we'll brush with the 'unlovable', we will work closely with people that will soon irritate the tripe out of us! Working in a team, in a community, makes for bushfire season. Consider how a large forest is ignited by a small fire.

Prayer Suggestion

Before we say, "blessed are the mute", let us recognise that we need to speak out God's word (Colossians 3:16 again), so let us ask for God's Holy Spirit to master our tentative tongues for us.



The Lakes

TUESDAY 10 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:3-6

Plug In...

Verses 3 & 4 illustrates how a small part can influence the whole. A similar point in verse 6, the tongue corrupts the whole person – it can destroy 'true religion' (1:26-27).

Chew It Over...

We really must come to terms with the enormous, sometimes irreversible, harm that can be caused just by talking too much (Proverbs 10:8); by boasting (Proverbs 12:19); by rumours; through repeating a confidence (Proverbs 18:12).

In what area(s) of speech do you need to take more care?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that the words that come out of your mouth will be pleasing and honouring to our Lord.



WEDNESDAY 11 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:7-12

Plug In...

Follow each image James employs to hammer home the tongue is *soooooooooo very very* dangerous. It sits right there in our mouth keyed to our heart.

Chew It Over...

The difficulty Christians face is we're renewed men and women who retain sinful hearts. Our default habits die hard. The wider context of Chapter 3 helps show there is hope. The Christian need not be the miserable slave of their tongue (for example remember 2:12-13 and 4:6-7).

It's worth continuing to train your tongue. James 1:18 advance increasing success; we've been given 'new birth'. New birth sponsors hope. Therefore, for you, what heart attitudes inflame harmful speech? What wisdom learnt from James this week will guard your mouth against destructive speech?

Prayer Suggestion

May the Spirit of God bubble up and quell the hellish origin of our tongues; may the implanted word grip us with a heart of love for others – words and deeds.



THURSDAY 12 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:13-16

Plug In...

While James urges to ask for wisdom (1:5), there appears to be people bragging about being wise. However, the brag does not test for wisdom, rather it is good conduct done in humility. Brag and you've just publicly imploded your 'religion'; your own words just declared your hand. Such bragging is demonic-like (v.15).

Chew It Over...

Wisdom's humility develops from understanding our sinfulness and our place in the world before God. Propping ourselves before others denies our sinfulness and reveals we're fuelled by envy and selfish ambition. Such bragging either originates from demons, or it is describing our behaviour as no different to how demons perform.

We speak so often, so fast, we can hardly hear what we are saying. With our noisy heads, our noisy lives, commit to lay in bed tonight while no one is talking. While you're not speaking. Be open to discover what you actually said today, what you were thinking, get to know your own attitudes. Were you crowing, boasting, grandstanding? Repent and allow the Lord's humility to emerge.

Prayer Suggestion

Reveal Lord our envy, our sensual, earthly, demonic-like words and actions. Rain on us your righteousness.



FRIDAY 13 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:17-18

Plug In...

In contrast from earthly, sensual, demonic-like so-called 'wisdom', verse 17 presents what wisdom from the Heavenly Father of Lights looks like. God donates these gifts; they rain down on the Christian (1:17).

Chew It Over...

How can genuine humble person ever stop requesting such wisdom to manifest in their lives. Ask again (1:5).

Prayer Suggestion

Lord remove our envy, our sensual, earthly, demonic-like words and actions. Shower, lavish on us your righteousness.



WEEKEND 14-15 JANUARY 2017

SERIES: THE LETTER OF JAMES

Read: James 3:1-18

Plug In...

James argues that the tongue is the index of the heart. Read about this again along with the following proverbs.

Proverbs 8:8 – All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse.

Proverbs 10:19-20 – Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues. The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

Proverbs 12:18 – The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 15:1-2 – A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

Proverbs 16:24 – Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

Proverbs 18:21 – The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 21:23 – Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask for the wisdom of Proverbs 8:8 – All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse.