

Fire From Hell

Text : **James 3: 1-8 ; Ephesians 4: 25-32**

S#1.
S#2.

A. What is the greatest challenge America has ever faced ?

1. The settlers' struggle to survive and establish permanent colonies ?
2. Our fight for independence was long and arduous ?
3. We fought two brutal world wars ?
4. Even now we struggle for unity ?

B. What's the greatest challenge you've ever faced ?

1. For some it was surviving the great depression or a war.
2. For many it is overcoming some devastating disease.
3. The loss of a spouse is always a great challenge.
4. Even worse is a spouse that chooses to abandon the marriage.

C. Our greatest individual struggle we face is overcoming the desires of the flesh.

1. We all struggle to overcome the influence of Satan on the earth and in our lives.
2. We all live in a body which is easily motivated to have evil desires.
3. Satan is very skilled at using the weakness of our flesh to attack us.
4. The most difficult part of the flesh we have to control is our tongue.
 - a. We're born with the instinctive desire to procreate so we develop sexual discipline
 - b. We're born with the instinct to sustain ourselves so we eat, but develop discipline.
 - c. We're born with the desire to be accepted and to rise in the social order. (*pride*)
 - d. We desire to possess things and to gain. (*part of instinct for survival*)

I. Our most difficult struggle against our flesh is the battle to tame our tongue. S#3.

A. James warns us describing it as the ultimate spiritual battle. S#4.

1. **James 3: 2** – For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.
2. “**He is a perfect man**,” does not indicate that he is without sin. `
 - a. Perfect : { *teleios* } 1 brought to its end, finished. **4B1** full grown, adult, .., mature.
 - b. James uses word 4 times e.g. **1:4** – let endurance have its perfect result
 - c. John also uses “*teleios*” as mature ... **I John 4: 18** – but perfect love casts out fear
3. Thus, a controlled tongue is a sign of spiritual maturity.

S#5.

B. When one becomes a Christian he begins the process of becoming Christ-like.

1. **Rom. 8: 1** ... When one becomes a Christian all of the guilt of sin is removed.
2. Though guilt of sin is gone, the desire to sin remains.

James 1: 14-15 – Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

3. The process of becoming Christ-like begins with one surrendering self to God.

Rom. 12: 1-2 – Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,

S#6.

- a. One must commit his body, not just render mental assent.
- b. The surrendered body must live differently than those in the world.
- c. The different lifestyle is motivated by **transformed** worldview. (*totally changed*)

C. The Christians transformation is a process which takes time.

1. **II Cor. 3: 18** – But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

S#7.

2. **II Pet. 3: 17-18** – Be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, **18** but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

D. A Christian knows he is maturing when his tongue is continually under control.

S#8.

II. One's tongue requires constant control at all times; the job is never complete.**A. The tongue is like a highly spirited horse.**

S#9.

1. **James 3: 3** – Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.
2. A spirited horse is always looking for an opportunity to get its head.
3. Such a horse is highly prized, but only by those who know how to control it.
4. It can be dangerous in the hands of one who can't control it.

B. One's tongue is never permanently under control.

S#10.

1. One's tongue is controlled by his heart.
2. One's heart is never consistently pure.
 - a. **Jer. 17: 9** – The heart is more deceitful than all else
And is desperately wicked; Who can understand it?

- b. **Mark 7: 20-23** – And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, **S#11.** that is what defiles the man. **21** "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, **22** deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. **23** All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

3. The unbridled tongue is quick to reveal the evil that is in one's heart.

C. We are accountable for every word we let slip past the bridle.

1. **Matt. 12: 34-37** – You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what **S#12.** is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. **35**
(*Keep filling with good → The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*)

2. **Careless** : { *argos* } 1 free from labour, at leisure. 2 lazy, (**UNGUARDED words**)

3. God's judgment of one's words represents His judgment of his heart.

S#13.

* **D. The course public discourse common today is indicative of course ungodly hearts**

S#14.

III. Though a small member the tongue has a disproportionately large impact.

A. The Nimitz-class aircraft carriers are massive ships 20 stories tall.

S#15.

1. The ship displaces 97,000 tons of water. (194 mil lbs)
2. Their deck is 4.5 acres ... 1092 ft x 252 ft.
3. Powered by 2 reactors which produce 250,000 horsepower each (A4W reactors)
 - a. Pushes by 4 screws each 25 ft. across with 5 blades
 - b. Can cruise at 30 knots, 35+ mph. (1 knot = 1.15 miles) =
4. Total of all crews of 5 to 6,000 men.

B. This mighty ship is turned by only two small rudders.

S#16.

1. The rudders are 29 ft. high x 22 ft. long
2. The rudders weigh only 50 tons turn a ship that weighs 97,000 tons.
3. One man turns the ship using a small steering which he can turn with one hand.

C. Our tongue is as powerful as the rudder on the USS Eisenhower.

S#17.

1. Jesus sent His followers out to change the world with words, not weapons.

Mark 16: 15 – Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

2. The job of all who are called to be Christians is to use words to change the world.

I Pet. 2: 9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **S#18.**

D. The words of Jesus have changed the world. **S#19.**

1. Military might was unable to accomplish what His words have done.
 - a. The Spanish inquisition failed to Christianize the world but words are evangelizing
 - b. The crusades failure to establish Christian rule, but the gospel changed nations.
2. The teachings of Jesus have changed the definition of human rights.
 - a. Slavery has been eliminated in much of the world .. where Christianity flourishes.
 - b. Equality of all men is respected where Christianity is the dominant religion.
3. Christianity changes the way women are viewed.
 - a. They are no longer property.
 - b. Women are given legal rights such as ownership.
 - c. Women are no longer forced to marry.
4. Compassion and mercy are enshrined in law.
5. There are even rules of war and war crimes tribunals.

S#20.

E. Though you may have no position of authority, your words still have great power

1. Your words can prevent conflict.
 - a. **Prov. 15: 1-2** – A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. **2** The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.
 - b. Your words have the ability to control the atmosphere in your home or workplace.
2. Your words can lift the dispirited and broken hearted.
 - a. **Prov. 12: 25** – Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad. **S#21.**
 - b. 18% of all suicides are from 7% of the population ... **veterans** and active duty.
 - c. Most suicides can be prevented by words of encouragement.
3. Your words can change the eternal destiny of someone you know.
 - a. **John 6: 68** – "You do not want to go away also, do you?" **68** Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.

- b. **Gal. 6: 2** – Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. S#22.
- c. **James 5: 19-20** – My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

IV. Though small the tongue can be enormously destructive. S#23.

A. Two of the worst fires in American history started on the same day in 1871.

- 1. The Peshtigo fire in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin S#24.
 - a. At 8:30 p.m. on October 8 the fire was observed as a distant red glow.
 - b. On the morning of the 9th, 1152 people were dead and 350 others were not found.
 - c. The fire was started by sparks from a passing train.
- 2. The great Chicago fire happened the same evening only 250 miles away. S#25.
 - a. Chicago reporter invented story of Mrs. O’Leary’s cow kicking over lantern.
 - b. Stoked by the wind, a small fire destroyed 4 square miles of the city.
 - c. Everything was very dry and most things were made out of wood. (*drought*)
 - d. 300 people were killed, 17,450 building were destroyed and 100,000 left homeless
 - e. The fire did \$200 million in damage which exceeds \$4 billion in today’s dollars.

B. Man’s tongue is a fire of equal destructive power. S#26.

- 1. **James 3: 6** – And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. S#27.
 - a. The tongue has great destructive power.
 - b. It is prone toward evil so it must be contained.
- 2. The source of the evil in the tongue is HELL.
- 3. **Matt. 12: 34** ... Since the tongue speaks from the heart ... HELL affects hearts.

C. Malicious words can destroy men’s souls. S#28.

- 1. **Prov. 12: 18** – There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.
- 2. **Prov. 18: 21** – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, S#29.
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

3. **Prov. 26: 28** – A lying tongue hates those it crushes,
And a flattering mouth works ruin.
4. **Psa. 140: 3** – They (*evil people*) sharpen their tongues as a serpent;
Poison of a viper is under their lips.

CONCLUSION :

A. An uncontrolled tongue will destroy its owner.

S#30.

1. **Prov. 13: 3** – The one who guards his mouth preserves his life;
The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.
2. **Prov. 18: 7** – A fool's mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul. S#31.
3. **Prov. 21: 23** – He who guards his mouth and his tongue,
Guards his soul from troubles.

B. We will be judged by all of our words.

1. One who does not bridle his tongue only thinks he's a Christian.
James 1: 26 – If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not
bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart,
this man's religion is worthless. S#32.
2. Every word we speak is significant.
Matt. 12: 36 – But I tell you that every careless word that people speak,
they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

C. We must learn to carefully consider our words.

S#33.

1. It is common to man to just view our words as social interaction.
2. God has a purpose for His servants and He uses our words to accomplish it.
3. **Col. 4: 5-6** – Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the
most of the opportunity. **6** Let your speech always be with grace,
as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you
should respond to each person.

INVITATION :

S#34. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 3: 1-8**

1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. **2** For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. **3** Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. **4** Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. **5** So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. **7** For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. **8** But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

Ephesians 4: 25-32

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor for we are members of one another. **26** Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and do not give the devil an opportunity. **28** He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. **29** Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. **30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.