

**Countdown Video** - Fall Tree 2  
**Music Video:** Our God  
**Slide Background:** Taming the Tongue  
**Video Illustration:** “The Power of Words”  
**Sermon Series:** Book of James 11/01/15

**Title: Danger, Danger, Danger!**

**Big Idea:** In 1965 a television series entitled “Lost in Space”. One of the focal characters was an automated robot whose primary purpose was to care for the Robinson family. When danger presented itself the robot would cry out the warning “danger, Will Robinson, danger!” Today we don’t look to a robot to warn us of danger but we have the Word of God. In Chapter 3 of the Book of James there is a warning of danger outlined by James. This warning comes concerning three different aspects of Christian living.

(1<sup>st</sup>) In verses 3:1-2 there is a warning concerning those who desire to teach.

(2<sup>nd</sup>) Verses 3:3-13 James points us to the danger of using the tongue and the damage it can cause.

(3<sup>rd</sup>) Thirdly James cries danger in the use of worldly wisdom.

### **Read Sermon Text**

**James 3:1-18** <The Untamable Tongue> 3) My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. NKJV

### 1. Danger to Teachers (vs. 1-2)

**James 3:1-2** <The Untamable Tongue> 3 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. NKJV

- a. As I read this passage it makes me wonder as to what is going on in the church as James make the statement about not becoming a teacher. Apparently there were people within this church that had a desire to be recognized as teachers. In my many years of ministry I have known several people who desired to be teachers of the Word even though their motivation was not a calling to teach from God but, a desire to be recognized as “a leader”.
- b. A person who is called to teach by God is not called to teach because of their vast knowledge of God’s word or their desire to be identified as a leader but they are called by God because of their willing heart to be used in whatever place or position that God can use them.
- c. The person who desires to teach must realize that there is a tremendous responsibility that comes with becoming a teacher. That responsibility carries a “stricter judgement” according to James. Those who desire to teach need to understand the great responsibility they take on to shape and mold the hearts and minds of those who they are given the responsibility for. James points out that we all stumble (make mistakes) but, we must able to control what we say and do our best to say what God wants us to teach as teachers. The desire to be a teacher of God’s Word alone is not enough. We must be called of God and willing to impart the truth of the word.

**Matt 10:24** "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. NKJV

**John 3:10** Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? NKJV

**Rom 2:20** an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. NKJV

**1 Cor 12:28** And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. NKJV

**Eph 4:11** And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, NKJV

**1 Peter 5:3** nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; NKJV

**Text Illustration:**

A newly appointed young preacher was contacted by the local funeral director to hold a graveside committal service at a small country cemetery in Iowa. There was to be no funeral, just the committal, because sadly, the deceased had no family or friends left in Iowa.

The young pastor started early to the cemetery, but lost his way on the long back roads. After backtracking many miles, he finally arrived, a half-hour late. The hearse was nowhere in sight, and the workmen were relaxing under a near-by tree, eating their lunch.

The pastor went to the open grave and found that the vault lid was already in place. He took out his book and read the service.

As he returned to his car, one of the workmen paused between bites and said, "Think we should have told him that's a septic tank?"

**Text Illustration: WESLEY RESPONDS TO CRITICISM** -John Wesley was a great English preacher of the 1700s. He was considered a rather spiffy dresser. One Sunday morning he wore a bow tie that had long ribbons that hung downward. After the sermon was over a lady walked up to him and said, "Brother Wesley, are you open to some criticism?"

He said, "I guess so. What would you like to criticize?"

She said, "The ribbons on your tie are entirely too long and inappropriate for a man of God." And she took out her scissors and cut them off.

A hush fell over the people standing there as Wesley calmly asked, "Now may I borrow the scissors for a moment?" As she handed them to him, he said,

"Ma'am, are you open to some criticism?" She answered, "Well, I suppose I am." He said, "All right then, please stick out your tongue."

(From a sermon by Stephen Sheane, New Year - New You, 12/23/2010)

## 2. Danger in the Tongue (vs. 3-12)

**James 3:3-12** Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

NKJV

- a. The second danger is the controlling of the tongue and the destruction it can cause. James warning us to is the “controlling the tongue”. James provides three illustrations on control. The first is that of putting a bit in the mouth of a horse, the second the control of large ships being driven by fierce winds, and controlled by a very small rudder and lastly how the words we speak no matter how insignificant can start a fire that can set the whole forest on fire.
- b. James first illustration on controlling the tongue, he compares the control with controlling a horse. A horse is controlled by putting a bit in the horse’s mouth. With the bit in the mouth of a horse we are able to turn the animal, stop and the horse. James points out that we are able to control the direction of the horse and in the same way as Christians we must bridle our tongue. The second illustration James illustrates his point as he compares large ship as it sails on the ocean. Even in the most difficult sailing situations the Captain is able to direct the ship in whatever direction he chooses with a small rudder. The rudder by comparison of the ship size to the rudder it is very small yet it is able to control the ship.
- c. The last illustration James points out how easy it is to start a fire that that can very quickly destroy a forest. That destructive fire is started by just a spark. We often make the smallest statement and that word can destroy individuals, families, groups and even churches.
- d. James points out that no man can control the tongue yet we have been able to control animals and speaks of the destruction it can do. It is interesting that he points out that those who are not careful with our words can bless God with the same tongue that we curse men. Not just men but the tongue can be used curse men, women, boys and girls who were created in the image of God.

- e. The real question is who controls our tongue is it God or is it Satan. We must realize that only when we allow God to control what we say is like a spring that produces sweet water or a tree that produces good fruit. The choice is ours as to who we let control our tongue.

**Text Illustration:** God has given us two ears, but one tongue, to show that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God has set a double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue. — Thomas Watson

**Text Illustration:** A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the two fallen frogs that they were as good as dead. The two fallen frogs ignored their comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all of their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the fallen frogs took heed to what they were saying and gave up. He lay down and died.

The other fallen frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped harder and harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

This story teaches two lessons:

- There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it through the day.
- A destructive word to someone who is down can be what it takes to kill them. Be careful of what you say. Speak life to those who cross your path.

### 3. Danger of Worldly Wisdom (vs. 13-18)

**James 3:13-18** <Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom>

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. 18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.  
NKJV

- a. One of primary themes of the Book of James is wisdom. James instruction on wisdom could be stated in this way. Practical living directed by the Word of God. We glorify God when we live within the realm of Godly wisdom. Yet when we let worldly wisdom direct our life we only find heart

ache and trouble. Many believe that the Word of God is impractical for today, which is so far from the truth. As believers in Christ would follow the precepts of God's Word we would not only glorify our Heavenly Father but our daily living would be much easier.

- b. James points that worldly living is not from God but it is demonic in its origin. In verse 15 & 16 James state that this wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. These are of Satan.
- c. However James points out that (Godly) wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. As a follower of Jesus that should be our focus and desire to honor God in the way we live.

**Text Illustration:**

"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." (Socrates)

You cannot learn Godly wisdom in a University and get a degree in it. It can only come to a heart in right relationship with God, and seeking it.

**Text Illustration: WISHING FOR PASCAL'S BRAIN**

Biblical Education is the process by which Godly character is formed, strength of clear conscious and sound mind is amplified, and understanding is sharpened, as a result of which one can walk in divine wisdom.

Someone once approached Blaise Pascal, the famous French philosopher and said, "If I had your brains, I would be a better person." Pascal replied, "Be a better person and you will have my brains."

Bible says In Philippians 2:5 "Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:]" (Amplified Bible)