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The Power of the Tongue

James 3:1-12

I. Review and Introduction

- James 3:1-12 The damage of the tongue
- James 3:13-18 The solution
- James 4:1-12 The problem of slander and dissension

II. The Power of the Tongue *How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!* (James 3:5)

A. Teachers (James 3:1-2)

B. Contrasts (James 3:3-5a)

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. (James 1:26)

C. Damage of the tongue (James 3:5b-8)

World of unrighteousness; stains the whole body; sets on fire the course of life; set on fire by hell;

No human can tame the tongue

Restless evil, full of deadly poison

D. Absurd contradictions (James 3:9-12)

James' warning is obvious: what is good at heart must produce good; what is evil at heart will inevitably produce evil. So the heart that is not right with God cannot help but produce ungodly speech . . . only a renewed heart can produce pure speech; and consistently (though not perfectly) pure speech is to be the product of the renewed heart. (Moo, 165-66)

III. Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires

A. A renewed heart

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45)

Ezekiel 36:25-27; Romans 8:9-11, 10:9-10

B. Think before you speak

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C. Remember Christ is present

D. Have an escape plan

E. Ask someone to hold you accountable

IV. Repair and restoration

A. Apologize

B. Offer unconditional forgiveness

C. Use words that encourage!

D. Model the one who brought you forth by his own will

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:22-24