

## Evidence

### James 3:5-12

[Jas 3:5-12 ESV] 5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

## I. Intro

- A. Evidence of Faith comes in many ways.
- B. Some evidence is marked by distinct and obvious change immediately upon a persons life.
- C. Other Evidence is marked by gradual shaping and forming of the believer through God's gentle mercy and grace.
- D. Yet other evidence is marked by the desire of the heart to be comforted into the image of God, while recognizing the struggle.
  1. We are here most of the time
  2. We are in a battle.
- E. But make no mistake, there is clear and present evidence of Christ in a believers life.

## II. Text

- A. Verse 5-6
  1. A strong statement, and clear directive.
  2. Be warned, be reminded, be sober in your understand, receive this truth today.
  3. This explanation is an illustration that is meant to speak to the heart of the matter with which we all struggle.
- B. Verse 7-8
  1. Physical and spiritual collide
  2. Our hearts desire to honor God, our tongues are a restless evil, full of deadly poison.
- C. Verse 9-10
  1. Blessing and Cursing from the same tongue
  2. MY BROTHERS...an appeal to unity in this challenge
  3. THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE: Challenge
- D. Verse 11-12
  1. We battle a dichotomy
  2. We battle the flesh
  3. But We battle

## III. Points

- A. Evidence
  1. This is the reality, your life will have evidence of your conviction.
  2. Fruit is the evidence
  3. The struggle, in the right way, can also be the evidence.
  4. Driving home from Houston, I looked over to a power line above a creek:
    - a) The power line had tons of fishing gear attached to it in various locations.
    - b) This seemed to provide evidence of a few basic truths:
      - (1) Possibility #1: there was a guy selling fishing gear and advertising his wares.
      - (2) Possibility #2: someone was storing their fishing gear out there for future use.

- (3) Possibility #3: There is a missing hole down there that is worth the risk of losing a \$5 piece of tackle...evidence would declare that a wall hanger was there and waiting on you to risk it.
5. If you are a child of God, your speech will give evidence
  6. If you choose not to allow God to work in your speech, you are lacking evidence.
  7. Positive Evidence:
    - a) Desiring your speech to build up
    - b) Desiring to convey truth, and do so in an effective way, a way that allows for the possibility for a person to change
      - (1) You can convey truth in a way that will ensure they do not hear it...
      - (2) Like trying to steer your car with the horn
      - (3) Without love, you are a clanging cymbal
  8. [Mat 7:15-20 ESV] 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.
- B. The Tongue
1. is:
    - a) Small but powerful
    - b) A Fire
    - c) A World of Unrighteousness
    - d) Untamable
    - e) A Restless Evil
    - f) A Deadly Poison
  2. How great a fire is set by a small spark:
    - a) Big fires do not start big
    - b) A small spark gains momentum as fuel and oxygen become more available.
    - c) California is dealing with this right now, and we see the devastation from a misplaced or uncontrolled fire.
  3. Do not miss the warning of the danger found in the tongue
  4. But also, do not miss the opportunity to use the tongue for blessing!
- C. Bless the Lord
1. The young Jonathan Edwards penned a number of his Resolutions around the theme of the tongue. They are worth noting:
    - a) Resolved, Never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against any one, to bring it to, and try it strictly by, the test of this Resolution.
    - b) Resolved, In narrations never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
    - c) Resolved, Never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call to it.
    - d) Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak. (Cited from Sereno E. Dwight's Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards in The Works of Jonathan Edwards, 1834 [reprinted by Banner of Truth, 1974], 1:xxi-xxii)
  2. Whenever you resolve for your speech to honor God, you:
    - a) Resolve to not speak at times
    - b) Resolve to choose your words carefully
    - c) Resolve to give no credibility to the enemy's accusation against you.
  3. Bless the Lord from your actions and your words
    - a) Speak a good word for Jesus

- b) Speak with confidence and humility
  - c) Speak with integrity and without compromise
4. But also:
- a) Earn your voice through relationship, genuine relationship
  - b) Hear those who feel unheard, and gently bring them to truth.
  - c) Illustration:
    - (1) I heard a traveling evangelist that was referred to as “God’s Wasp”
    - (2) It always bothered me, because I guess there is a place in the ecosystem for wasps...
    - (3) But I think the challenge today is to speak truth in love, and refuse to compromise the integrity of the message with anything else!

IV. Close