

LESSON 31: JAMES 3-5
AUGUST 16, 2017

OVERVIEW

- . The tongue problem – James 3:1-18
- . The source of trouble between people – James 4:1-17
- . Warnings for the rich – James 5:1-6
- . Patience in suffering – James 5:7-20

THE TONGUE PROBLEM – JAMES 3:1-18

- . The tongue is good at doing evil – James 3:1-6
 - . Our tongues can be used for either good or evil
 - . History is full of examples of how people used the tongue to promote either good or evil things
 - . James compares the tongue to other small parts of larger objects that control the larger object
 - . The bit in a horse's mouth, the rudder on a ship, a spark in a forest that can start a fire
 - . These things by themselves are harmless
 - . At the same time, these things used improperly can cause damage and destruction
 - . A tongue by itself is harmless
 - . However, a tongue used to convey thoughts, through words can do a lot of good or a lot of damage
 - . An untimely word, an unfair evaluation or a small "slander" can cause great pain and damage
- . The tongue is uncontrollable – James 3:7-12
 - . No man can tame a tongue – James 3:7-8
 - . God can help us control our tongues, but that is not what James is saying here
 - . James is saying that no man, anywhere, has ever been able to control his tongue
 - . Even Christians, apart from the power and grace of God, cannot control it
 - . Through God, all things are possible, including helping us to control our tongue

- . Three steps to control our tongue
 - . Present your mind to God
 - . In Romans 12:1-2 Paul speaks of mind control, which leads to tongue control
 - . Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"
 - . What comes out of our mouth is a reflection of what is going on in our mind and our heart
 - . Begin to obey Christ's teachings
 - . Paul says we are to bring every thought into obedience to Christ
 - . As we search scripture to see what the Lord would have us do and then set about to be obedient to His calling, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God will begin to change our way of thinking which will begin to change the way we talk
 - . Practice speaking helpfully
 - . We need to control our tongues positively so that we say things we ought to say
 - . We need to practice speaking well of people regularly
 - . "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"
- . The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere James 3:17

THE SOURCE OF TROUBLE BETWEEN PEOPLE - JAMES 4:1-17

- . We need to look no further than ourselves to begin to better understand the source of trouble between people
 - . "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" - James 4:1-2
 - . The solution is for us to give up this struggle and instead ask God what His desires for us are
 - . The problems we have with other people are merely the problems that are most visible
 - . We have even more serious problems where God is concerned
 - . James calls us "adulterous people" because we have committed spiritual adultery against God
 - . We have rebelled against God's rightful rule over us and now fondly but foolishly believe that we are masters of our own lives
 - . Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you - James 4:7-8
 - . He will restore the broken relationship that exists between you and Him and He will subdue your pride, which is the source of your problems

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING – JAMES 5:7-20

- . Christians are called to action – we are not to sit back and do nothing
 - . Here James is addressing those who are in situations or conditions where they simply can't do that
 - . He is addressing the sick, oppressed, the destitute, the downtrodden
- . Be patient – James 5:7
 - . Remember the God you serve is a just God
 - . Remember that Christ is returning and the time is coming when injustices that are being inflicted now will be made right
 - . James is also speaking to Christians saying that they too will have to account for their actions
- . Standing firm – James 5:8-10
 - . Patience does not imply being passive
 - . We are called to be patient in an active way – by continuing to work at growing our faith and furthering our understanding of God's will through our studying of Scripture
 - . Stand firm means not to retreat but to endure as God's ambassadors
 - . He directs our attention to the prophets, many who endured great physical hardship, yet stood firm
 - . An example would be Isaiah, who many historians was sawed in two for his faith
 - . For Christians today, we will need to stand firm and endure the ridicule that will come from a society whose moral norms are drifting further away from our Christian norms
- . Finally James encourages us to pray in all things we do
 - . God hears the prayers of the righteous and they are powerful and effective
 - . Our most common problem regarding prayer is our neglect to pray

NEXT LESSON: SEPTEMBER 6, 2017: I PETER 1-2