

## SERMON OUTLINE

**SERMON TITLE:** The Meanest Member in Our Church

**SERMON REFERENCE:** James 3:1-12

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #0517

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 3:1-12
  - i) James 3:1 cautions us not to thoughtlessly or carelessly become a religious teacher because one day, what we teach will come under close scrutiny of the judgment of God.
- b) In James 3:6, we learn that the meanest member in our churches is the tongue.
  - i) The tongue is a fire and a world of iniquity.
- c) James mentions specifically three things about the tongue, which we will study today.

2) THE INFLUENCE OF THE TONGUE (JAMES 3:3-5)

- a) The tongue, though very small, is also very powerful and influential and should be handled with care.
- b) The tongue can direct, destroy and delight.
- c) James illustrates the power of the tongue by showing us three small things that have great influence.
  - i) The tongue is like a bit in a horse's mouth.
    - (1) James 3:3
    - (2) A small, petite person can direct a powerful horse with just a little piece of metal in the horse's mouth.
      - (a) A very small bit can control the whole horse.
    - (3) James is stating that just a small word can sometimes control the destiny of a person.
  - ii) The tongue is like a rudder on a mighty ship.
    - (1) James 3:4
    - (2) Just a little rudder can change the direction of a mighty ship.
      - (a) The same is true regarding the power of our speech.
        - (i) Countless lives have been blessed and brought to the Lord Jesus Christ through the speech of Gospel ministers.
        - (ii) Adolph Hitler whipped the people of Germany into a frenzy with his demonical and maniacal speeches.
      - (b) The power of the tongue, like the rudder of a ship, can bring a ship that's been tossed by the waves and wind into a safe harbor.
      - (c) The power of the tongue, under the control of a wrong person, can bring the ship of life upon the rocks and reefs of disaster and destruction.
    - (3) We should never underestimate the power of the tongue.
  - iii) The tongue is like a spark in dry grass.
    - (1) James 3:5
    - (2) We need to be careful how we use our tongue because it is like a torch.
      - (a) A fire does not have to be great and large to begin with.

- (b) A small fire can become a big fire, and a few words wrongly used can bring devastation and destruction.
- (3) Fire can be a wonderful servant.
  - (a) We wouldn't have civilization as we know it without fire.
- (4) But fire is a poor master.
- (5) Fire can warm, or fire can burn.
  - (a) Words can bless, or words can curse.
  - (b) Words can warm a heart, or words can inflame hatred.
    - (i) Words can cause a chain reaction.
- d) We need to handle our tongue with care because we will one day give an account for every idle word that we speak.
  - i) Matthew 12:36

### 3) THE INIQUITY OF THE TONGUE (JAMES 3:6-8)

- a) James uses several figures of speech to describe the iniquity of the tongue.
  - i) The tongue defiles like a broken sewer.
    - (1) James 3:6
      - (a) It defiles the whole body.
    - (2) The tongue pollutes like a broken sewer pipe.
      - (a) The greatest ecological problem in America today is the problem of wrongly used words that defile the whole body.
    - (3) This includes using filthy, dirty speech.
      - (a) We need to beware of being a "gutter mouth."
  - ii) The tongue destroys like an arsonist.
    - (1) James 3:6
    - (2) There are those who deliberately, hurtfully and hatefully use their tongues to destroy the lives of others.
    - (3) Proverbs 16:27-28
    - (4) There are people who wouldn't think of using vulgar language, but they gossip and criticize.
  - iii) The tongue devours like a wild beast.
    - (1) James 3:7-8
    - (2) The tongue is like a wild, ferocious and untamable beast.
    - (3) Words hurt.
    - (4) Galatians 5:15
      - (a) It seems strange that Paul would have to write this to Christians; Christians who are consuming one another like ferocious animals, biting and destroying one another.
  - iv) The tongue deadens like a vile poison.
    - (1) James 3:8
    - (2) We can poison and kill with our tongue.
      - (a) Proverbs 18:21
    - (3) We can assassinate someone's character with our words.

- (4) We should never utter reckless words against any servant of Christ or idly repeat slanderous darts being hurled at others.
  - b) We need to remember that we will one day stand before Almighty God and give an account.
    - i) Matthew 12:36-37
    - ii) As Christians, we will give an account, not in condemnation, but at the judgment seat of Christ.
- 4) THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE TONGUE (JAMES 3:9-12)
- a) Many of us love the Lord, and yet we are inconsistent with our lives.
    - i) Many of us are inconsistent in the use of our tongues.
  - b) James is stating that these inconsistencies are impossible in the physical, natural world.
    - i) A spring cannot yield salt water and fresh water at the same time.
    - ii) An olive tree will not bear figs.
  - c) What is impossible in the physical world ought not to be in the spiritual world.
    - i) It is improper in the spiritual world.
    - ii) It is improper for us to go to church and praise God on Sunday and then leave and criticize our brothers and sisters in Christ.
      - (1) We shouldn't go from blessing God to criticizing men.
        - (a) We cannot bless God and curse men at the same time.
    - iii) If we love God, then we should let it be shown in our speech toward others.
    - iv) We should be consistent.
- 5) CONCLUSION
- a) What do we do about the problem of the tongue?
    - i) The Bible says that if a man can bridle his own tongue, then he is a mature man.
      - (1) James 3:2
    - ii) The Bible also says that no man can tame the tongue.
      - (1) James 3:8
    - iii) These two Scriptures are not contradicting one another.
      - (1) James is saying that we cannot tame the tongue.
        - (a) We cannot control our speech and tame our tongue apart from the help of the Holy Spirit of God.
    - iv) It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.
      - (1) Matthew 12:34
      - (2) What is in the root of the tree will show in the fruit of the tree.
  - b) If we are to control our tongues, then we must control our hearts.
    - i) While it is the bit that controls the horse, there is someone who holds the reins.
      - (1) Who is the person holding the reins in your life?

- (a) Is it self or the Holy Spirit?
- c) The only way we can have peace in our homes is to control the tongue, and the only way to control the tongue is to be born again.
  - i) Only God can cleanse our hearts and make the tongue behave.
  - ii) We cannot make the tongue behave any more than we could save ourselves.
- d) When you give your heart to Jesus, your tongue can be tamed by the blessed, wonderful Spirit of God.
- e) Have you been saved? Do you know the Lord Jesus personally?
  - i) If not, you can pray to Him today and ask Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16