

# The Use of the Tongue

James 1:26-27; 3:8-12

## Introduction:

- A. Freedom of religion and speech are great *civil* liberties.
  - 1. It means that government grants and protects our right to openly believe or say what we please.
  - 2. It does not mean that the same permissions are granted by God.
- B. God has much to say about what we can or cannot believe or say.
  - 1. God tells us what we can and cannot believe and practice in religion.
  - 2. God also tells us what we can and cannot say with his blessing and approval.
- C. James shows that the same tongue is often, but should not be, made to produce two opposite fruits.

## Discussion:

### I. Blessing.

- A. It can be used to directly bless God.
  - 1. It can confess faith in the Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10)
  - 2. It can worship God (Heb. 13:15) – Sing, pray, teach/preach.
- B. It can be used to bless man.
  - 1. Preach the gospel to him (Rom. 1:15, 16; Mark 16:15, 16)
  - 2. Warn and rebuke him in danger (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Tit. 2:10-13)
  - 3. Spread comfort and cheer among men (1 Thess. 4:18).
  - 4. Promote peace between men (Matt. 5:9; Matt. 18:15-17).

### II. Cursing.

- A. It can be used to serve the purposes of hell (v. 6)
  - 1. Profanes the holy name of God and curses.
  - 2. Promotes false doctrines (2 John 9-11).
  - 3. Produces sin when overactive (Prov. 10:19)
- B. It can be used to curse man.
  - 1. Ruins good names by lies, insinuation, and revealed secrets (Prov. 11:13)
  - 2. Unnecessarily hurts people (Prov. 18:8)
    - a. “But it is the truth” – yes, but is it necessary – may be at times (3 Jno. 9; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15)
    - b. “But, I said it to his face”
  - 3. Promotes strife (Prov. 26:20) – in nations, families, communities and churches.
- C. It often reveals the true character of its owner. (cf. Matt. 12:34-37)
  - 1. Foul language reveals sinful desires and designs.
  - 2. Constant criticism often reveals envy and insecurity – thinks pulling other down lift self.
  - 3. “Popping off” and “getting them told” reveals immaturity (Horn blower at stop sign)
  - 4. Murmuring (constant gripping) often reveals discontent and ingratitude (cf. Phil. 4:11).

## Conclusion:

- A. May we realize the power of the tongue – for blessing or cursing – like fire can serve or destroy.
- B. May we realize the need to guard and bridle the tongue (cf. Psalms 141:3)
- C. May we learn when, where and how to speak to please God and bless man.