

## Control your Tongue (James 3:1-12)

*In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God. Amen.*

### Aim

- † Outline the various sins committed by the tongue
- † Establish the necessity of controlling the tongue

### Key verses

- *“Set a Guard O Lord over my mouth, Keep watch over the door of my lips“ (Ps 141:1)*
- *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that may impart grace to the hearer” (Eph 4:29)*
- *“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit” (Pro 15:4)*
- *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from trouble” (Pro 15:4)*

### Lesson

Each one of us is blessed by being able to speak and communicate with others as we are blessed by the senses of vision, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. These characteristics help us live and function normally; however they could be means by which we commit sinful actions.

The tongue although is a small part of the body it can commit a lot of sins namely lying, swearing, gossiping, judging others, insulting others etc. Hence controlling the tongue is a way of abstaining from sin.

The epistle of St James chapter 3 revolves around the importance of controlling the tongue where he declare that if can control our tongue we can control our whole bodies. This is because the tongue is the most difficult part to control. Sin in the area of speech is the most common - and most damaging - of sins. If anyone does not sin in the area of his speech, he can be characterized as a "**perfect man**". So a perfect body starts from a pure tongue.

St James compared the tongue to the bits in the mouths of the horses and the rudder of the ship. Those bits in the mouths of horses help us direct them same as the rudder which directs the route of a huge ship. The point is the contrast between the smallness of the tongue and the, greatness of its effect. The little bit and the little rudder achieve big results. So does the little member of the body, the tongue.

The effect of the tongue still continues where it is a little member and boasts great things hence the impact of the tongue is completely out of proportion to its size.

## **Control your Tongue (James 3:1-12)**

St James then turns our attention to the devastating impact of an uncontrolled tongue. The contrast between the small and the great is continued, but now the emphasis is on the destruction caused.

The tongue is then exemplified as fire and a vast system of all kinds of iniquity and its potential for evil are great.

The tongue has the potential to defile (stain) the whole body. The entire person can be polluted by the uncontrolled tongue. “Sets **on fire the course of our life** - The tongue can begin a blaze that reaches out into all areas of life. Its devastation is not limited to a single source, but touches many other people. Once set into motion, it spreads in so many ways and directions that it is impossible to restrain it.

The complexity of taming the tongue was shown as man has been able to tame all creatures but not his own tongue. It is similar to a wild creature that goes out of control. There is a real contradiction by what our tongue can say. With our tongue we pray, praise the lord and sing hymns but out of the same mouth come sinful words. We always need to maintain the purity of our tongue because fresh water and bitter water cannot come out of the same opening.

### **From the saying of our great fathers**

#### **St Isaac the Syrian**

- Whoever talks a lot is empty from the inside even though he is knowledgeable with a lot of things
- Talk to all people with a sweet a tongue you will gain them all as friends
- Whoever talks to people with a bitter tongue does not deserve God’s blessings.

### **Conclusion**

We should look at the number of sins we commit on a daily basis through our tongue so that we can train ourselves to control our tongue. We should always remember that the same opening that praises the lord should not curse him.

**Glory is to God, forever Amen.**