Crossroads International Church Matthew Lyle

Series: Faith in Action 2024-12-01

**Taming the Tongue: A Call to Wisdom**

***James 3:1-18***

**Problem:** How can we display our faith with our words when we can’t control our tongue?

I. **Taming the Tongue (1-12)**

A. The Weight of Words (1-2)

1. Jesus told Christians to teach and highlighted the importance of teaching,

but strongly condemned (judged) the scribes and pharisees for being hypocrites

* “Woe to you, hypocrites! blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.
* You clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside are greed and self-indulgence,
* you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful,

but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

(Matthew 23:16-26, ESV)

2. James also highlights that teaching comes with greater judgment.

3. James suggests that being able to ‘control what we say’ is of upmost importance

B. The Wild Tongue (3-12)

1. The Powerful tongue (3-6)

* Provides 3 examples where something small can affect something much larger

(bit controls a horse, rudder controls a ship, a small fire cause a large blaze)

* Highlights the problem of “boasting” *(see back of handout for reasons for boasting)*

2. The Uncontrollable Tongue (7-8)

* Although every “kind” of animal can be tamed, not every animal is tamed
* A common house cat who does as he pleases is similar to the uncontrollable tongue
* No man can control the tongue, only the power of the Holy Spirit within us!

3. The Revealing Tongue (9-12)

* The problem is not the tongue itself but what it reveals about the person behind the tongue
* Our tongues reveal what is in our heart

=> Our heart naturally rebels against God,

=> Only when we turn to God can we start to control our tongue

**II. True Wisdom (13-18)**

1. Worldly wisdom (13-16)

* is earthly, unspiritual, demonic
* leads to jealousy and selfish ambition
* results in disorder and every vile practice

1. Wisdom from Above (17-18)

* Leads to positive behaviors
* results in order and peace

**Faith in action speaks wisely, using words and deeds to reflect God’s character.**

Reasons for Boasting

1. Psychological Reasons

* Self-Esteem Boost: People often boast to validate their self-worth. By highlighting their accomplishments, they seek reassurance of their value.
* Insecurity and Compensation: Boasting can be a defense mechanism to mask feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. Exaggerating strengths can be a way to distract from perceived weaknesses.
* Cognitive Bias: People naturally see their own achievements as more significant. This bias can lead to unintentional boasting because they assume others will share their admiration.

2. Social Reasons

* Seeking Recognition: Boasting is often a way to gain attention, admiration, or approval from others. It can stem from a desire to be seen, heard, or respected.
* Group Dynamics: In competitive environments, boasting can establish dominance or signal competence. It’s a way to position oneself as valuable or influential within a group.
* Impressing Others: Boasting is sometimes aimed at impressing specific individuals (e.g., potential employers, romantic partners, or peers).

3. Emotional Reasons

* Excitement and Pride: People might boast when genuinely excited about their achievements, without intending to come off as arrogant. Sharing their success feels natural to them.
* Validation Seeking: Boasting can be a way to invite validation from others, hoping they’ll agree or praise the accomplishment.
* Relieving Fear of Being Overlooked: Some people fear their efforts or achievements will go unnoticed, so they highlight them as a preemptive move.

4. Cultural and Environmental Influences

* Cultural Norms: In some cultures, boasting is seen as acceptable or even encouraged, particularly when it highlights individualism or personal success. In contrast, boasting may be frowned upon in collectivist cultures, where humility is valued.
* Social Media and Comparison: In today’s digital age, platforms like social media amplify boasting, as people often share highlights of their lives to maintain social status or compete in an environment of curated perfection.

5. Narcissistic Tendencies

* Exaggerated Self-Importance: Individuals with narcissistic traits may boast because they genuinely believe they are exceptional and expect others to recognize it.
* Manipulative Intent: In some cases, boasting is used to manipulate perceptions or control how others view the person, aiming to gain leverage in relationships or situations.

6. Miscommunication or Misinterpretation

* Unintentional Boasting: Sometimes, what appears to be boasting is simply someone sharing their experiences or excitement without realizing it may come across as excessive.