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AI Summary

Chapter

Action Items

We are now at the Midway Point of James. How many of you were here when we began James last year? I guess it was. So most of you were not here. And if you would like the previous lessons, they'll be over here in the file on the table there.

I have the last one here. And the last one was in August. We finished up chapter two. So we're now Midway Point of James' Epistle. And thus far we have had 15 lessons covering 53 verses and we have 55 verses left.

Pastor asked me if I would go ahead and begin chapter three, get back into James and we'll go through chapter three and then we'll revert back to, what was his name? Steve Lawson. Thank you. Thank you there.

That guy. That guy. You know him. So we'll go back to Steve Lawson's series on John. So before we look at today's lesson, let me give you, for those of you who aren't here, I just want to give you just a brief review of this book.

James is one of the most distinctively Christian and Christ -centered letters in the New Testament. Matter of fact, they say that James was probably the first book written in the New Testament. It's a book about putting our faith into action.

It's a book about spiritual maturity. It's a book about the testing of a Christian's faith. It's a relevant book for 21st century Christians and it is a book about a faith that works. And that is what we have titled this series, A Faith That Works.

So the book of James is probably the earliest book of the New Testament. It was written from Jerusalem, perhaps around AD 45 by James. There are many James's mentioned in the New Testament at least five But this James was the son of Mary and Joseph and therefore he was the half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ It has been called the first epistle of Christians. And the theme of James in support.

We remember this. It's what we believe will change the way that we behave. What we believe will change the way that we behave and there are only five short chapters 108 verses 2309 words. I didn't count them but my computer knows how many there are. It contains questions or references from several Old Testament books and many of the Lord's sermons on the Mount the book of James Challenges those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ to grow up. All the way through this book.

He's reminding us that we need to grow up that what we believe will change the way that we behave and we need to become mature Christians. We've learned that James is very practical and he has been teaching us how to live the Christian life.

Beginning in this chapter, chapter 3, he's now going to give us many examples of putting into practice the principles that he has taught in the first two chapters. And as we come to chapter 3, we might want to put on our spiritual steel toes, toed boots.

How many of you know what brogans are? You ever heard that term? Brogans? Yeah, Carl has. Brogans are steel toed boots. That's what we call them in the military. And of course they protect your feet.

So in a sense here, we need to come to this chapter, as it were, with our spiritual steel toed boots on. Because James is going to step on our toes. Now what you hear this morning is not Brother Escalera.

This is James speaking this morning. All right. And he is speaking with authority from the Lord Jesus Christ. He's not going to sugarcoat or mince his words. He's not going to pull any punches. He's going to tell it like it is.

You ever use that expression? Tell it like it is. And but when we do that, we need to do that in love. Tell it like it is, but let's do it in love. And I think that's something we should all do. Paul says in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 15, but speaking the truth in love.

And so we need to know the truth. We need to share the truth, but we need to do it in love. James is going to deal with a sin that we're all guilty of and that we all commit often, perhaps even today, maybe even this morning.

And I venture to say that there are, there may be some here who have a serious problem with a little member of our body because we have failed to tame it. James is going to give us the biblical mandate for controlling the tongue.

And our lesson this morning is entitled, can we have a slide here brother? That helps when you turn it on. There we go. All right. The lesson is entitled the untameable tongue. And because of the importance of what James is going to tell us, this is going to be part one of a three part lesson.

All right. These first twelve verses, this morning and in two future lessons, the Lord willing. So as James concluded chapter 2, he gave us a closing remark summarizing that chapter by saying that if a man claims that he has faith, but there's no spirit in his faith, no life, no evidence, his faith is as dead as a dead body without the Spirit.

Notice in chapter 2 verse 26, for as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is also, is dead also. So a person's faith is demonstrated by his actions. Again, what we believe will change the way that we see hate.

So now in chapter 3, he tells us that if a man's faith is real, that he'll be seen by the way that he uses his tongue. You know what, we open our mouths and speak, our tongues will reveal what we believe and the world will see it.

And if we have real faith that works, they'll see that also. I believe that it was Socrates, there's a statue of Socrates, what they believe he looked like. He was a classical Greek philosopher and he once said to one of his students, open your mouth that I may know you.

It's pretty good, isn't it? Open your mouth that I may know you. And the Puritan preacher Thomas Brooks, he once wrote this, we know metals by their tinkling and we know men by their talking. When we open our mouths, people will know us and they will know what is in our hearts.

And Jesus said that what is in our hearts will come out of our mouth. Luke chapter 6, 45, out of the abundance of the heart, the man speaks. Is this too loud, by the way? Is this too, it's not too loud.

We're not getting a ring. Okay, we tried to adjust it just before the service. On another occasion, a young man came to Socrates to be instructed in the oratory, that's the art of formal speaking in public.

And the moment he was introduced, the young man began to talk without a pause. When Socrates could get a word in, he said this, young man, I will have to charge you a double fee. A double fee, why is that?

Well, the old man, the old sage replied, because I will have to teach you two sciences. First, how to hold your tongue, and then, how to use it. And that's the point that James is making in this chapter here.

And I believe that we all need to be instructed in these two sciences. You know it used to be that when you were sick, the first thing a doctor would say to you was what? Stick out your tongue. I don't know if they still do that, but they used to do that.

Then you'd put a thermometer under it and you would take your temperature. And this is what James is saying. He says, in essence, you say you have faith. Well, let me see your tongue. Stick out your tongue.

Let me see it. Let me take your spiritual temperature also. By the way, I didn't know this until this week as I was preparing. Did you know that July the 19th is stick out your tongue day? Bruce, I didn't know that.

Isn't that crazy? We have a day for everything. We have a national pancake day. I think sometime last month it was national doughnut day. In June. June 3rd and 4th. Remember to get yourself a doughnut next June and celebrate national doughnut day.

So James tells us that the tongue is a thermometer of our spiritual health and it's a measuring stick of our Christian growth. He's so interested in our tongue that he mentions it in every chapter of this book.

Five little chapters. Every chapter he mentions something about the tongue. Especially in chapter three here as we've already seen in the first 12 verses. The tongue has been called, among other things, the unruly member, a double-edged sword, and the world's biggest little troublemaker.

And there are more sins associated with the tongue than any other part of our being. Pastor John MacArthur said this quote,

the tongue is a tattletail and it tells on the heart the tongue is the revealer of the heart.

The Bible refers directly or indirectly to, now listen to this, a wicked tongue, a deceitful tongue, a lying tongue, a perverse tongue, a filthy tongue, a corrupt tongue, a bitter tongue, an angry tongue, a crafty tongue, a flattering tongue, a slanderous tongue, a gossiping tongue, a backbiting tongue, a blaspheming tongue, a foolish tongue, a boasting tongue, a murmuring tongue, a complaining tongue, a cursing tongue, a contemptuous tongue, a sensual tongue, a vile tongue, and a tail-bearing tongue.

a whispering tongue and exaggerating tongue. Wow. There's a lot said about the tongue in the Bible, isn't there? So did you see your tongue anywhere in that list? Someone, John MacArthur, goes on to say, no wonder God put our tongue in a cage behind our teeth and walled in by our mouth.

That little member is responsible for many, many sins. So during the next three lessons, we're going to see what the tongue is capable of. For instance, it displays our sin for all to see. It directs our path.

It destroys our lives. It defies our control and it demonstrates our hypocrisy. Those things we're going to see in this chapter here. First of all, the tongue displays our sins and we see that in verse 1 and 2. The first thing that James tells us is that the tongue has potential to condemn us by displaying our sin for all to see.

First of all, he mentions in verse one, the teacher. He begins this chapter with a warning to those who are desiring to be teachers, to be careful because they are particularly in danger of having their sin displayed by their tongue.

Literally, he says, let not many of you become teachers. Don't foolishly rush into a position of teaching. Now the word masters, refers to someone who functions in an official teaching or preaching capacity.

Apparently there were in the assembly to which James is writing, there were some Jews who aspired to be teachers and he reminds them that they have a tremendous responsibility and will receive a greater condemnation or a greater judgment for leading others astray if they misrepresent the truth of God's Word. Its so important to teach the truth.

One writer said this. Apparently there were quote apparently there were in James's day those who aspired to be teachers because of the privileges that teaching appeared to bestow status, prominence, authority without considering the immense responsibilities it involved.

You see they wanted to become teachers for the wrong reasons. In my ministry down through the years I've had people who were qualified to teach and some who weren't. And there were some who thought they were qualified to teach.

And so James is warning against this. First Timothy one, seven, Paul said that there were some people desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

They didn't have a clue. They'd have a clue about what they were teaching, nor did they understand what they were saying. They just wanted to be heard and they had their own motives and prideful ambitions.

You know, teachers and preachers, matter of fact, every Christian, we need to know when to speak and when not to speak. Amen? Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, said this in Ecclesiastes, chapter three and verse seven, or verse one and seven, to everything there's a season, a time for every purpose under the heaven, a time to keep silent and a time to speak.

Here's a helpful little phrase that I've heard many years ago. I did it again today. I guess I'm in a rut. I missed another opportunity to keep my big mouth shut. Well, that's humorous, isn't it? But how true it is.

So often we miss that opportunity. No preacher or teacher has the right to use the pulpit as a whipping post or lash out with his tongue. James says that they will have, pardon me, a greater condemnation when they stand before God.

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 2 15 that if we study God's word and we rightly divide the word of truth that will not have to be ashamed and therefore not face the greater judgment.

And by the way, James is he's not contradicting the Great Commission in Matthew chapter 28 19 through 20, because we all, all of us in a sense are to be teachers proclaiming the gospel. What he's doing is he's not discouraging anyone from teaching.

He's just saying be careful when you aspire to do that. Neither is he contradicting what Paul said in 1st Timothy 3 and verse

one. And that is this. This is a true saying, if a man desired the office of a bishop, an overseer, an elder or pastor, which involves teaching and preaching, he desired a good word.

However, no one should teach or preach without a sense of the seriousness involved and the accountability that they must give for proclaiming God's word. And in love especially and of course that's for everyone who is in a position of teaching Matthew Simpson how many of you have heard of him have you ever heard Dave Matthew Simpson?

He was an old Methodist preacher back in the 1800s. And this is what he said about the preacher quote His theme is the pulpit. He stands in Christ's stead. His message is the word of God. Around him are immortal souls. The Savior unseen is beside him. The Holy Spirit broods over the congregation and angels gaze upon the scene. Heaven and hell await the issue.

What associations? What vast vast responsibility? You know as I stand and preach. Down through the years of ministry I've had to remember that Who I'm representing and what I say I'll be judged for what I say one day and it is a responsibility of awesome responsibility how many years ago a young military wife and our first minister in England she was saved in the ministry there in England and and she made me a cross stitch anybody do cross stitch ladies?

Do you anybody? Nobody? Janice like your minority not very many people do that anymore But this young lady made me a cross stitch and it says, What difference will it will it make if anyone's life in anyone's life if this sermon is preached? What difference will it make in anyone's life if this sermon is preached? Had that hanging in my office. It's a reminder of the serious position and responsibility that I have as I stand to teach and preach the word of God.

Yes, but... I understand the strict judgment part for someone who is a false teacher, someone who is not, someone who can. What about, how does that work when it's talking about here, about someone who is a believer, because there is no condemnation in Christ?

How does that marry? I think we'll certainly give account for all that we say and all that we do. And of course in life itself, there are times when we will be under condemnation as a sense of being condemned by others because of what we've said or how we've said it.

Do you have something to add to that? No, I just... To me it's kind of an autonomy in that sense, a believer in that judgment scenario. I just don't see where the firm will stand. And because of justification or justified, we don't have to go through that process of recounting every deed that was done because we're covered.

And so that's just wondering what your thoughts for on that. Well, listen to this. Hebrews 13, verse 7 and 17 says, remember them which have the rule over you, who has spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your soul, watch, as they that must give account.

So here again, the matter of we're going to give account for what we say, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. So one day we'll give account for the words that we've spoken.

So, yeah. He brings up a good point because I was thinking about the same thing. There's only two types of people in the world, believers, non-believers. Correct? Believers are being sanctified. We are forgiven for future and past sins in our lives.

Essentially, a preacher or a teacher delivers a sermon or a teaching and is teaching incorrectly or falsely. I take the warnings as to those that are false teachers and preachers which we see today. And the common judgments are going to weigh down on them because they're leading others into false teachings.

You see it throughout our country. I take that as a warning for the teacher to examine themselves, to make sure they're of the faith. And that's what I think it's referring to, because let's say you're preaching and you slip at the tongue, you teach something that's incorrect or maybe wrong, but it's not like you're intentionally deceiving others if you did that.

Now it's an if, I didn't say you did. Right, right, I understand. But even then you're already forgiven by Christ. So we all make mistakes, we all sin. It's just there's a higher bar if you're a person, and we've seen that throughout history, certain sins God looks at more sternly, or it's more critical of, and one of them could be the leading of the sheep away.

And I think that it's basically a warning Preachers to examine yourself to make sure you're on faith. Because if you're not, you shouldn't be behind that. Correct. Teachers and preachers must be careful about what comes out of our mouths.

Not only what we say, but how we say it. And you see, my position can be right, but my disposition may be wrong in the way that I say it. And thus I sin with my tongue. Yes, we are forgiven, but I believe we're still...

Paul talks about this. I think is it first Corinthians or second Corinthians about our works that'll be burned up? Anybody remember Brother Tim? Yeah, I believe it's in first Corinthians. So I think it applies both ways.

Okay, anybody else have a thought on that? All right, yes, Bruce. We are forgiving a lot of reciprocity. In other words, you reap what you sow. And that's how your church doesn't believe. It's not an eternal judgment.

Slap somebody, slap you back. Or you might slap you more hard. And that's you reap what you sow. Yes, sir. You know, my wife has to... She has to remind me sometimes that I need to watch the tone of my voice.

I have a voice that tends to be a little strong sometimes. And of course it carries. And so I need to tone it down sometimes. The way that I say things to people. When I'm speaking to someone or when teaching or preaching.

And even though I may be sharing God's word, the tone of my voice, I believe, will make void the truth of God's word. You understand that? That makes sense? Okay. So James has been talking about the teacher.

It displays our sin. There's the teacher being a teacher, aspiring to be a teacher when... one is not qualified to do that. And then he talks about the perfect man. The next thing he mentions is a perfect man in verse 2.

Any perfect man here this morning? Anybody perfect? Okay. In verse 2, you'll notice what James, that James doesn't point his finger to accuse them without including himself because he says, we notice my brethren be not many masters knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

He acknowledges that he is also capable of sinning. And the word offend means to stumble, to sin. The little phrase we offend all, it literally means each and every one of us without exception. And the phrase in many things can also mean in many ways or times.

So James is saying in essence each and every one of us. Without exception, many times often stumble into sin in many different ways. So the picture is not of a Christian deliberately setting out to commit premeditated sin, but of him being tripped up as he's walking along the pathway of life.

You ever said in speaking to someone, have you ever blurted out something that you regret it later? We all have. We all do that. We're all capable of sin and not doing what is right. Romans 4, 23 says, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

So we all sin in many ways with our thoughts, with our actions, but especially with our tongue. And that's what James is dealing with in this chapter. Every one of us, we say things that are wrong, that are hurtful, that are unkind.

If I may just share an illustration, I wasn't going to do this, but I think I will. Many years ago, when our son went home to be with the Lord, we were in Germany. This was what, 25 years ago? Something like that.

We came home from Germany. He was living in North Carolina. And we came back for his funeral. And at the graveside, there was someone there who, he sort of knew our son, but he made some remarks about our son, John.

And the dear friend of ours who passed us down in Conyers, Georgia, he turned to this man and he said, what you've said, what you've done is not right. Others heard the remarks that he made about our son.

And he wasn't right with God, and he deserved what he got and so on, which is a very unkind thing to do. You know the best thing you can do at a funeral? You Keep your mouth shut, I can hear you. Not say anything.

We think we have to say something, don't we, when we go to a funeral? We don't have to say anything. Just be there for that person. And anyway, our dear friend, he told this particular person he needed to leave, and he did.

And so we're all capable of saying hurtful things, unkind things. So whether we're a teacher or a preacher or a lay person, we all have the responsibility to control our tongue, because our tongue displays our sin.

So James is, by the way, he's not saying that the perfect man is someone who has reached sinless perfection. I remember trying to witness to a young man in the Air Force when I was in the Air Force one time.

We were in, I think, a station in Columbus, Mississippi. I tried to witness and share Christ with him, and he said, but I'm not a sinner. He said, I've never sinned. And there are people who feel that way.

But the truth is that we all sin. We all sin in one way or another. Maybe you've never sinned with your hands, for example, killed someone or stolen anything. Maybe you've never sinned with your feet, gone to places that you know you should not go to.

However, there is no perfect man. There's only one who has never sinned with his tongue. There's no one here, excuse me, no one here who has never sinned with their tongue. Not one. Did you know that even little children, even babies, tell lies?

All right, Brother Dave? John, sorry. Psalm 58 verse 3, listen, it says, concerning the little babies, they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies. Oh, such a sweet little angel. Oh, they're so precious, they are precious, but they're not angels, right?

I said vipers and diapers. Vipers and diapers. I had to remember that. What did James mean by a perfect man? There are two views about this verse. The first one is that he's referring to a man who was absolutely perfect, like Jesus Christ and someone who would never offend.

So basically, according to this view, what James is saying is that the only people who don't sin with their mouth are perfect people. Well, there's only one problem with that, and that's what. There aren't any perfect people.

No one can claim that they do not offend with their tongue. The only person who never sinned with his tongue was the Lord Jesus. Luke tells us in chapter four, verse 22, concerning the Lord. and all bear him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

One day Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees who thought they were perfect. And in Matthew 12 verse 34 through 37, he... Well, let's turn there, alright? Matthew 12... Matthew 12 and Melody, would you read that please?

Verse 34 through 37. Oh, generation of vipers, how can he, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things.

things and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things but I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Thank you, dear.

There's the vipers, Scott. The second view is that James is saying that if a man does not continue to offend with his mouth or words then that man is perfect in the sense of being a mature man. He's a mature Christian.

He's demonstrating his spiritual maturity because only a spiritually mature person is able to control their whole body including their tongue. A person's faith that is able to control his tongue can also control his whole body.

And you know if we allow God's Holy Spirit to control our tongue which is the most condemning member of our body then he will control the rest and I agree with this particular view. So we have seen how the tongue displays our sin and it has the potential to condemn us before a world that is watching and more importantly before God who sees and who knows us.

Next week Lord willing, now that's not when our missionary is coming in? Is it following week? Two weeks. Alright so the Lord willing next week we will see that the tongue directs our path and it has power to control us.

By the way here's the final thought. Did you know that brushing your tongue helps remove plaque? You say what? Pastor, what are you talking about? Which can cause bad breath and encourage bacteria growth?

You know, they say you could do your mouth of disservice if you aren't also attacking the bacteria living on your tongue. James is saying, in essence, you say you have faith? Let me see your tongue. It may be a little dirty.

Maybe some of us need to brush our tongues with God's word this week. And that's the final thought. Amen? Any questions, any comments? Criticisms? No? All right, we'll let you out just a little bit early.

Father, thank you for this time together and your word. I pray that we've done it. We've done it justice. We've not added to it. And Lord, that you'd use it to make a difference in each of our lives.

Father, we ask that you help us to submit ourselves to you, our whole being, and that little member which gives us the most trouble, our tongues. Control our tongues, Lord. And help us to... praise you instead.

We'll see next week how our tongue can be used and what a deadly force it is. And we'll thank you for that. Bless our time of fellowship now. Pray for the next hour that you would bless and we'll thank you for that.

In Jesus' name, in all God's people said, Amen.