



James

The Epistle of Straw?



Recap

- ▶ Last week, we discussed James encouragement regarding faith and works.
- ▶ “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” (*James 2:14-26*)



Is that faith beneficial?
Is it even faith?



The Tongue

Our topic today



This is a surprising topic!

- Few consider these matters as critically important as James.
- In fact, we have a lot of ways of saying that **verbal sins** are not a big deal... “A little white lie...” “A slip of the tongue...”
- We glorify the “authentic person” with “no filter.” They’re “saying what everyone else is thinking.”
- By “just telling it like it is,” they reveal sin and satisfy our curiosity, so that we can all revel in the knowledge that the person who seems too good to be true **is**.



But this section is not just about gossip and lies.

- It's also about oath-making and oath-breaking.
- It's about people who get in over their heads and people who go too far.
- It's about the ways that we thoughtlessly transition from chatting after church to road rage on the way home.
 - From being the light of Christ to luring others toward lust.
 - From the peace which passes all understanding to slander.



Teaching is Dangerous

James 3:1-12

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways.



Are you Perfect?

James 3:1-12

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.



Bits & Rudders

James 3:1-12

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ² For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴ Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.



What controls *your* body??

James' Underlying Question



The Tongue – Small

James 3:1-12

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.





The Tongue – A Fire

James 3:1-12

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!





The Tongue – A World

James 3:1-12

⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.



The Tongue – A Beast

James 3:1-12

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue.



The Tongue – A Poison

James 3:1-12

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.



Water & Figs

James 3:1-12

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.



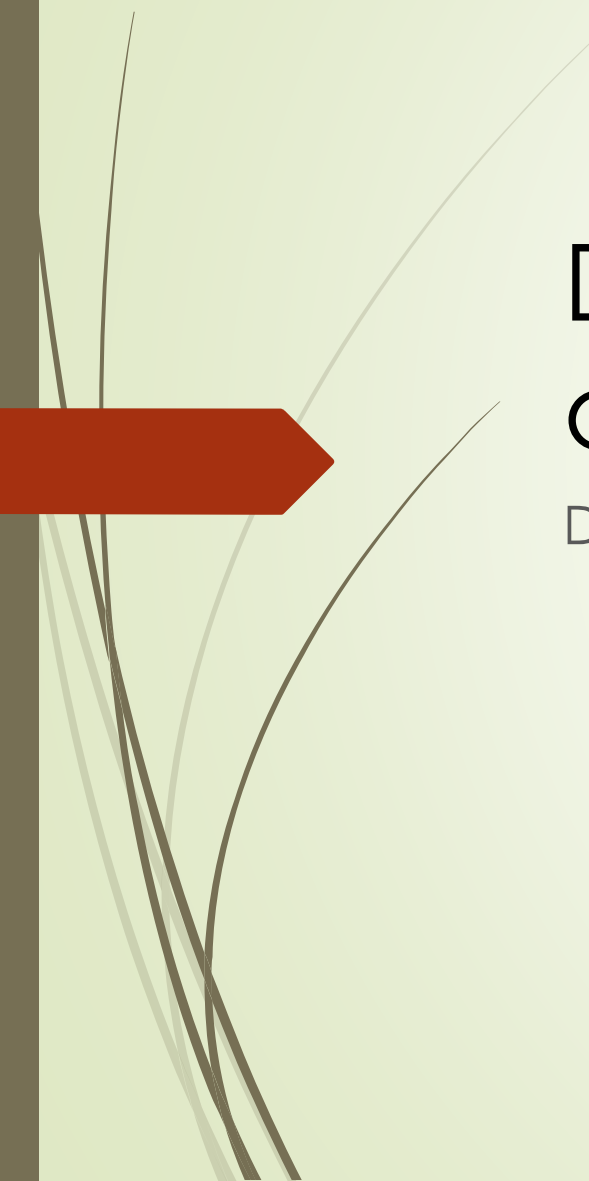
The Tongue is...

- Small
 - A Fire
 - A World
 - A Beast
 - A Poison
- 



Discussion Questions & Additional Scriptures for Study

For journaling, calling a friend, discussing with family, and prayer



Does my “yes” mean “yes”
and my “no” mean “no?”

Discussion Questions



Oaths, Yes, & No

Matthew 5:33-37

³³ “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.



When am I tempted to bend the truth? Why?

Discussion Questions



When am I tempted to brag?

Why?

Discussion Questions



How has my tongue gotten me into trouble?

Discussion Questions



Turn away from evil, and do good.

1 Peter 3:8–12 (quoting Psalm 34:12–16)

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For

*“Whoever desires to love life and see good days,
let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;*

*¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good;
let him seek peace and pursue it.*

*¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.*

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”



Reverse the Metaphor

James 3:1-12

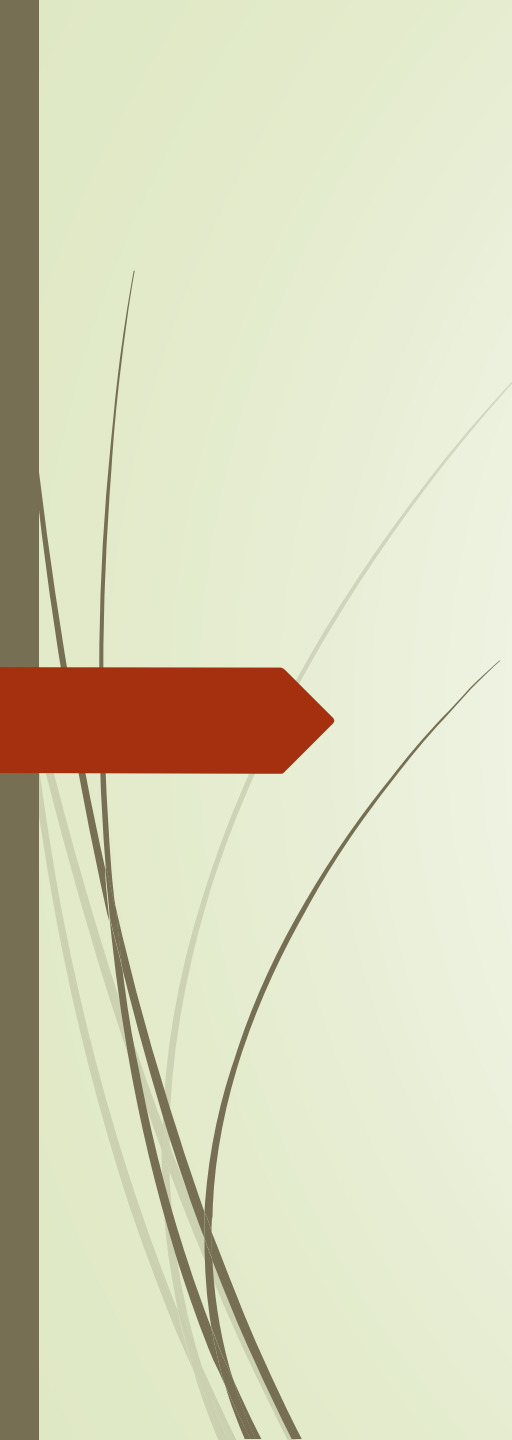
⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.



Give no opportunity to the devil.

Ephesians 4:25–32

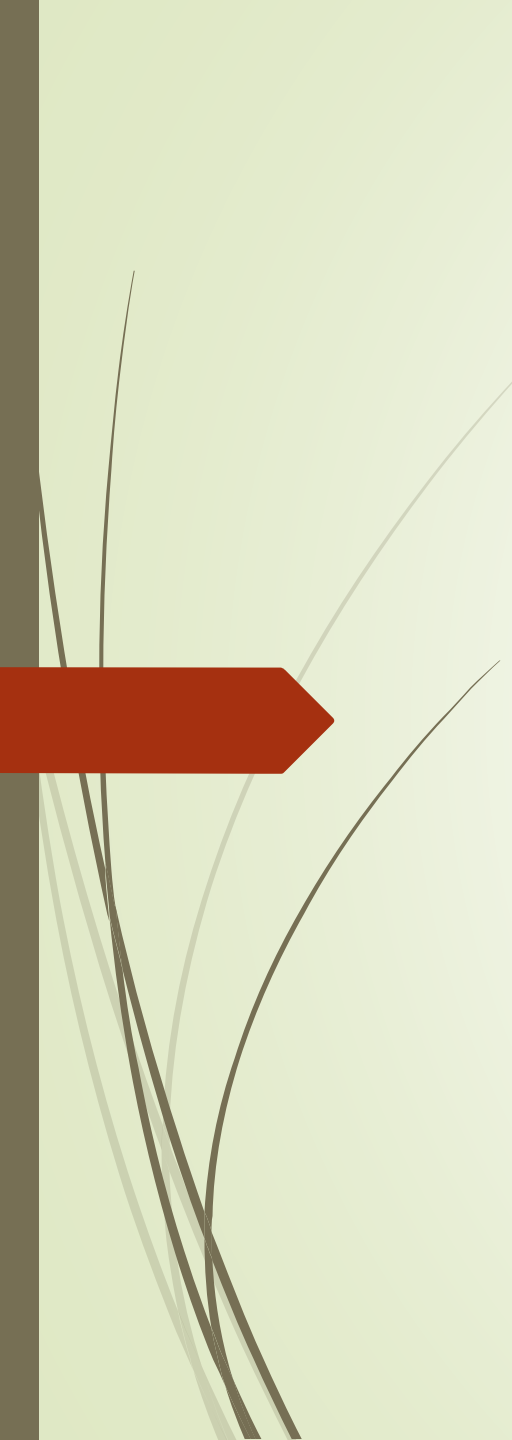
²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



¹¹ A word fitly spoken
is like apples of gold
in a setting of silver.

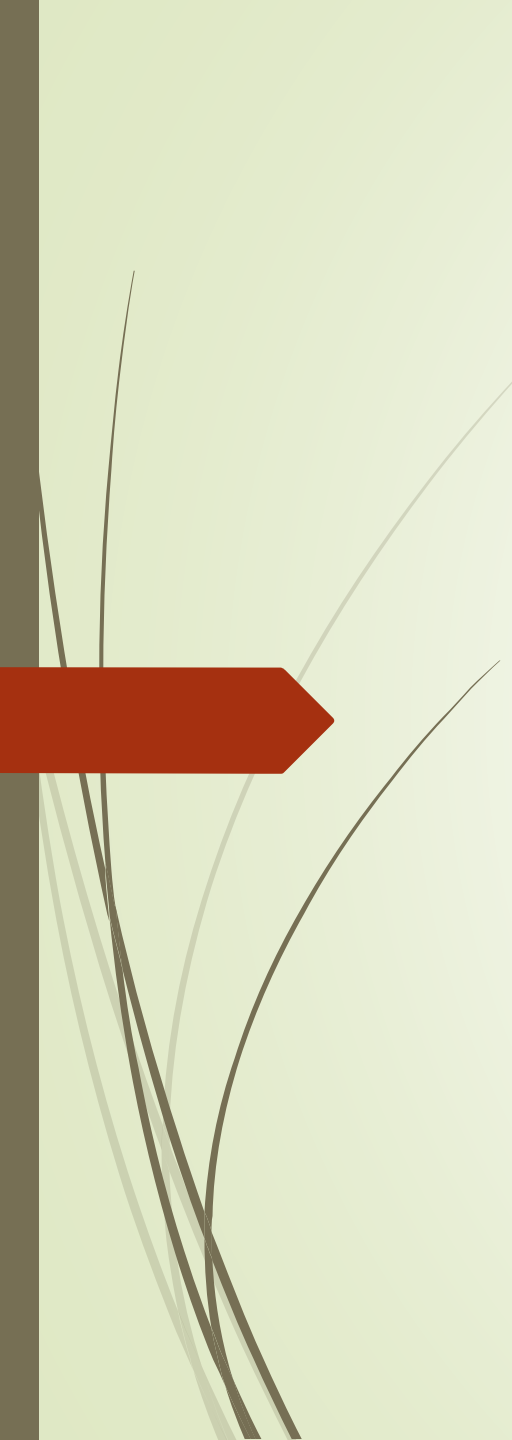
¹² Like a gold ring
or an ornament of gold
is a wise reprover
to a listening ear.

Proverbs 25:11–12 (ESV)



24 “No one can serve two masters,
for either he will hate the one
and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one
and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and money.

Matthew 6:24 (ESV)



24 “No one can serve two masters,
for either he will hate the one
and love the other,
or he will be devoted to the one
and despise the other.
You cannot serve God and ~~money~~.
the tongue.

James 3 (rephrased)



Wisdom

Next Week...