

Series: Just Do It; Sermon: No More Quarreling
delivered by Pastor Ben Panner on September 27, 2020

Bible text explored: James 3:1-4:12

3 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. **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. **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.

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. **15** This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. **18** And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

4 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? **2** You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. **4** You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **5** Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? **6** But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." **7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. **9** Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. **10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. **12** There

is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? [ESV]

Review and application:

1. What's the main idea of the passage?
2. What has the ability to cause the church to be full of conflict or full of peace? (3:5)
3. What illustrations does James use to show us the power of the tongue? How have you seen or experienced the power that words can have – for good or evil? (3:3-8)
4. What does James point out about the way we use our words in 3:9-12? What circumstances make it easiest to speak harshly and improperly? What steps could we take to fight that sin?
5. Do you think James is prohibiting Christians from speaking out against anything? Is he saying we can only use our tongues to affirm or encourage?
 - a. If a Christian can use their voice to show disagreement, how is that different than cursing our brothers? What does healthy disagreement look like?
6. James moves the conversation from the untamed tongue to the heart in 3:13-18. Through the Gospel, God transforms the hearts of Christians. What are virtues that characterize the heart filled with God's wisdom?
7. In what ways might jealousy and selfish ambition manifest themselves in our personal lives, our jobs, or our church? (3:14)
8. What is at the root of the untamed tongue, dissension, and quarreling? (4:4)
9. What is the next step that we could take to move toward a single-minded devotion to God? And how can we cultivate a deep, personal walk with God?
10. If someone is feeling guilty of any of the sins that James has listed, what should they put their hope in? (4:6-8a, 10)