Watch Your Mouth! 9.27.09

1:26If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless./ 3:1Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2For 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. 3If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 4Look 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. 5So 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! 6And 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. 7For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Our Mouths Are a Big Deal

- Tons of things we say are meant to minimize our words
  - "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me."
  - "We were <u>just</u> talking."
  - "I know I said it, but I didn't <u>mean</u> it."
- The Bible never minimizes our words but rather maximizes our words (3:8)
  - Three analogies
    - Animals (1:26; 3:3, 7)
    - Ships (3:4)
    - Fire (3:5-6)
  - The point: Big things are guided, steered, and started by small things.
  - The same is true with the mouth. Our little tongue . . .
    - Shows the purity of religion (1:26)
    - Exposes (teachers) to judgment (3:1)
    - Can lead to perfection (3:2)
    - Guides the course of life (3:6)

Our Mouths Are a Big Deal because They Reflect Our Hearts

- If we do not watch our mouths, our heart is deceived and our religion is worthless! (1:26) How can this be?
  - *James 1:18*—We have been born again <u>by the word</u> (cf. Ezek 36:26-27; John 3:1-8).
  - *James 1:21*—Having been born again by the word we are to <u>receive the word</u>.
  - *James 1:22*—But we do not merely receive the Word we are also to <u>do the word.</u>
  - *James 1:26*—The words that come out of our mouths ought to reflect the word that has changed our heart and the word that has been received in our heart.
- James's message is that the mouth is an apt indicator of the heart (3:9-12; Matt 12:33-37)
- James is concerned that we watch our mouths because James is concerned that we watch our hearts.

We Should Watch Our Mouths

- Speech we should <u>put off</u>
  - Gossip (3:9-10; 4:11)
  - Lying (Col 3:9-10)
  - Filthy Language (Eph 5:4)
- Speech we should <u>put on</u>
  - We should speak words of GRACE (Eph 4:29)
    - **G**od
    - **R**epent
    - **A**sk
    - **C**onfront
    - **E**ncourage
  - We MUST find ways to do this in our church

Watching Our Mouths Takes Grace

- James tells us to watch our mouths
  - Biblically we know that we watch our mouths by watching our hearts
  - If we are to talk the way we should we CANNOT do it by behavior modification
- This means we must <u>look deep</u>: beyond our words to our heart
- This means we must <u>look high</u>: beyond ourselves to Jesus (3:8)
  - We need Jesus' grace to forgive us
  - We need Jesus' grace to empower us