

**Presbyterian Church of Henderson**  
Worship Service 10:00 AM  
July 17, 2022  
*Living as God's People - Epistle of James*

**Ringling of the Bell**  
**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude**                 David's Lyre Brass Sextet

**\*Call to Worship**

God is good and loving to the faithful.

**Give thanks and praise for all that God has done for us.**

God is good!

**Praise the Lord!**

**\*Prayer of the Day**

Grant us this day, O God, not to be overtaken by anxious thoughts that can make us feel that you are not near. Give us the chance, to sit at your feet, to enjoy every word and every musical note that we may feel your real presence and in turn live out that presence within our families, our communities, our jobs, and our schools. Prepare us as we journey as your people, to worship and to obey. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, the image of the invisible God, and the firstborn over all creation. Amen.

**\*Hymn**         PH 464 "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

1 Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love;  
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,  
Opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
Drive the gloom of doubt away;  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day.

2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,  
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee,  
Center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
Singing bird and flowing fountain,  
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

3 Mortals, join the happy chorus  
Which the morning stars began;  
Love divine is reigning o'er us,  
Joining all in heaven's plan.  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
Victors in the midst of strife,

Joyful music leads us sunward  
In the triumph song of life.

**\*Call to Confession**

We live with this reality: God never forgets what we have done but, in mercy, forgives those whose hearts are full of repentance. Let us confess those things that break our relationship with God, assured that God will never break relationship with us.

**\*Prayer of Confession** (unison)

**Sometimes, O God, we behave like Martha. We get distracted in our routines, so busy with our daily chores that we forget to take the time to stop and breathe, to look up and to notice the creation you have given and the way it speaks about your love and passion for your people. We do not take time to listen for your words, while reading the Bible, while listening to music, while talking to friends, and we become worried and upset about many things. Sometimes, O God, we behave like Mary. We devote our time to looking up, thinking that everything we are commanded to do is to love God, and we forget to serve our neighbor, and to commit our time to the concrete work of the church, forgetting to get our hands dirty. God of balance, help us: forgive us when we do not know when to be workers and when to be hearers. In your mercy, heal our worries and our judgments, so that we can, indeed, keep the best part. In the name of our loving Master. Amen.**

**\*Assurance of Pardon**

Before, because of your evil thoughts and actions, you were strangers and enemies of God. Now, you have been reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Christ. Now, you can live in peace, restored by the blood shed on the cross. Live thankfully! In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

**\*Gloria Patri** (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

**\*Passing the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's Peace.

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— "The peace of Christ be with you"

**Prayer for Illumination**

Open our hearts and our minds, so that we can understand the fullness of your Word. Fill us with the light of the Holy Spirit, and bless the servant you have chosen, to share the Word proclaimed today. In the name of Christ, the Word revealed. Amen.

**First Reading** Psalm 52

Why do you boast, O mighty one, of mischief done against the godly? All day long you are plotting destruction. Your tongue is like a sharp razor, you worker of

treachery. You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking the truth. You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

But God will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. The righteous will see, and fear, and will laugh at the evildoer, saying, "See the one who would not take refuge in God, but trusted in abundant riches, and sought refuge in wealth!"

But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. I will thank you forever, because of what you have done. In the presence of the faithful. I will proclaim your name, for it is good.

**Special Music** "Nearer My God to Thee" arr. James

**Second Reading** James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! **And the tongue is a fire.** The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

**Children's Sermon** Pastor Eric

- How many have seen a fire?
- When I was little, I would watch the fires in So. CA, and the whole side of the mountain would be on fire.
- Smoke was everywhere and the ash from the fire got on your everything that was left outside.
- In our text today, the writer says the tongue is fire.
- What do you think it means?
- It has the ability to do destructive things like a forest fire.
- The words we say are very important.
- We can use our words to hurt other or we can use our words to begin healing.
- Which would you rather hear? Words that hurt or words that heal?
- Let's do the same.

**SERMON** "Watch Your Mouth!!!!"  
James 3:1-12

July 17, 2022

- There is a child's saying "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me."
- We all know that although it is a cute and memorable saying, nothing could be more false.
- We all realized this when your childhood best friend says something mean like "The color purple is ugly. I hate that color."
- Ouch, that hurts because purple is your favorite color.
- In fact, you were probably wearing purple that day.
- As we get older, words have a way to inflict much more damage than insulting someone's favorite color.
- Words of profanity, discrimination, personal character attacks, gossip, and any other hurtful thing out there.
- Words have a way of leaving deep scars: words like "you are ugly," "no good for nothing," "can't you be like everyone else?"
- People carry around those scars for many, many years.
- Many of our issues that we deal with today, can often be directly traced back to those hurtful words we had heard many years ago.
- They are like wounds that never heal.
- When I listen to the destructive words of others as well as my own, I am shocked how dangerous our words are because almost always our speech is used to make ourselves sound better and others look bad.
- James in his letter is saying that in the Body of Christ to "Watch Your Mouth."
- He does this by offering four characteristics of the tongue.

## Characteristics of the Tongue

### **1. The Tongue is Powerful**

- James offers three metaphors to show the directing power of speech.

#### 1) The tongue of the teacher

*1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle.*

- James is saying that there is a stricter judgement for teachers because of the influence of what is said.
- In the first century context of false teachers, James places a tall order on leadership who had teaching responsibilities, but he also wanted to keep young aspiring teachers to make sure they entered into the teaching ministry with the right motives.
- Many young Jewish Christians aspired to teach and carry some kind of rank and admiration like the Jewish Rabbis did.
- Whenever they had the opportunity to speak in an assembly, they would be overly anxious to speak up to impress others by their words.
- James is challenging these young teachers to take a hard look at their motivations for the teaching ministry because "they will be judged more strictly."
- It is one thing to have speech that only you or your family hears, but once you get in front of people, the teacher has a greater responsibility of the words said to others.

- EX: For me, writing a sermon every week is extremely time consuming. For me it takes at least 20 hours of study, prayer, and preparation. Why does it take me so long? Because of this text, that those who speak and teach will be judged with a greater strictness.
- All this to say, when we speak, we have influence to build up the Body of Christ or tear the Body of Christ into pieces.

## 2) Bit in the mouth of a horse

*3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies.*

- A horse which is faster and larger than a human is able to be controlled by a 3-4 inch steel bar across their mouth...it controls not just their head, but the whole animal!!!
- Can you imagine an animal close to a 5-10 times our weight can be controlled by a simple steel bar in its mouth!?!?
- The bar in itself has no power but the effective rider using the bit can control this massive, normally wild animal, into any direction the rider wishes.

## 3) Rudder of a large ship

*4 Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.*

- Ships were one of the largest structures early Christians knew.
- Ships were always subject to the forces driving them...that is the wind that had the ability to bend trees and move clouds.
- James points to the very small rudder of a ship in comparison to the size of the entire ship or even the winds that drive it.
- The person who controls the rudder controls the direction of the whole ship.

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

- Whether it is the tongue of an effective teacher, the bit in a horse's mouth, or the rudder of a ship, James is arguing that tiny things have the **power** to influence and the **power** to direct especially when it comes to the things we say.
- Know that the tongue is POWERFUL!

1. The Tongue is Powerful

## 2. The Tongue is Destructive

*How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!*

- James now moves to a different illustration to describe the impact of tongue.
- He uses the illustration of a forest fire.
- EX: On Oct 8, 1871 the fire in Peshtigo, Wisconsin was the deadliest fire in American history.
- It has been said that railroad workers clearing land for tracks that Sunday evening started a brush fire that ultimately became an inferno.
- The fire created its own wind system and turned into a tornado of fire.
- It quickly burned 1.2 million acres as many as 1500-2500 lives were lost in the fire. 16 towns received damage.
- ISW: This is what James wants us to think about.
- This is the impact our words can have.
- The tongue is fire causing.

*6 And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

- The Christian can declare that they are saved from hell.
- But the truth of the matter is that the same person can unleash hell upon another person with their tongue.
- This is the language that James is using to get his point across.
- The word for "hell" is the Greek word for "Gehenna."
- It was a reference to a place outside of the city of Jerusalem where trash was burned.
- It was so hot that it burned 24/7.
- Over time, Gehenna developed a reputation of being a disgusting, horrible place where many bad things happened.
- It became a place where sacrifices were made to pagan gods and the sacrifices were children.
- It was an evil, horrible, sinful place, and Jews stayed away from it.
- When James refers to "Gehenna," he is saying that we have the ability to unleash hell upon another person.
- We can do this by taking the coals of hell, and unbind them on another person, and emotionally burn them alive.
- I am sure we have all experienced hurtful negative words at one time or another.
- I wonder how many of you have been set on fire by somebody's words?
- Maybe the question should be, "Who have you set on fire?"
- Ways we start fires with our words:
  - GOSSIP: it is the idle talk or rumor about the personal or private affairs of others. This damages people and community. Paul speaks against that in *Romans 1:29-30* *They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil*
    - In this list of wickedness, those who gossip are listed.
    - Friends when we have the urge to say things about someone, this is the "hell" we release upon another person.
    - Gossip is in opposition to God.
    - "Have you heard..."
    - "Don't you know..."
  - SOCIAL MEDIA: people love to stir up controversy by stating things online that they would never have the nerve to say to someone in person. Because of the fact that the writer is anonymous, I have read the most disgusting, offensive, anger producing words I have ever seen. Internet comments sections are a breeding for hell to be released upon another person.
  - CONFLICT: because of our lack of skills in resolving conflict, we put on our punching gloves, and we fight with our words. Often times the words that we use have the ability to start fires.
- The tongue has the ability of unleashing evil inflammatory destructive power in our relationships with one another.
- A tongue has turned brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, and nation against nation.
- In the same way fires have a way to bring devastating destruction, and our tongues can be as destructive as well.

1. The Tongue is Powerful

2. The Tongue is Destructive

**3. The Tongue is Uncontrollable**

*7 For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, 8 but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

- The word for “tame” means to subdue, restrain within proper limits.
- I am sure James was not referring to doing tricks like you see at a circus or on YouTube, but being able to capture and control.
- This is not a scientific statement, but simply a way of saying how humans have been able to dominate over animals and not the other way around
- Ever since the beginning of time when God gave human beings the dominion over the animals, James was asserting the humans have the ability to control the animal world.
- But even though humanity has retained dominion over all kinds of animals, because of the fall and the inherent nature of sin, they have lost dominion over themselves.
- When James says, “No man can tame the tongue,” he is stating that no one on their own strength can subdue the tongue.
- In its natural state the tongue is a “restless evil” like a ferocious beast that will not be subdued.
- Using snake imagery, James says the tongue also full of deadly poison.
- James is offering an ugly picture that shows the destructive nature of the sin of our words, and how uncontrollable is our tongues.

1. The Tongue is Powerful
2. The Tongue is Destructive
3. The Tongue is Uncontrollable

#### **4. The Tongue is Revealing**

*9 With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.*

- James points a finger to the tongues of people within the Christian Church.
- With are innately evil tongues, we praise God and yet are able to curse others.
- He says the same mouth come blessing and cursing.
- On one hand we are able to use our tongues to praise God in worship, but outside the place of worship, we speak evil of people who are made in God’s image.
- In James’ day the king or emperor would set up his statue in the cities of his realm.
  - If anyone insulted or cursed the statue, they were treated as if they had cursed the emperor to his face, for the statue was the image of the emperor.
- Insulting of a person who is made in God’s image is like insulting God himself.
- This duality, two different and contradictory words coming out of the same mouth, is a type of hypocrisy.
- James then gives two examples to drive his point home.
- The first is drawn from the land of Israel where in the dry Jordan Valley one might see, in the distance, a stream flowing down the valley wall on the east side.
- Sometimes the water is fresh and good.
- Sometimes it is full of minerals (salt) and is undrinkable.
- But one thing is sure, the two types of water will not flow out of the same spring.
- The second example, one does not get different types of fruit from a tree or vine than that which grows according to its nature.

- KEY: The implication of this argument is that if we are speaking insults or curses, that is our nature.
- Our praises of God are a cover-up, a type of hypocrisy.
- James strongly says, "This ought not be so."
- He says, "Stop it!"
- What our words actually reveal is the dual nature of our hearts.
- Our words comes from our inner most being and reveals our heart.
- Matthew 12:34-35 Jesus says, "*You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure.*"
- Our tongues and outward behavior show the need for a savior.
- Remember when Jesus was on the cross, he prayed "Father forgive them."
- What is amazing about this prayer, Jesus unleashed heaven on those who unleashed hell on others.
- This tells me that there is hope in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Because Jesus died and rose again from the dead, we not have the ability to have our sins forgiven.
- When we become Christians, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit that gives us power to turn from sin rather than being slaves to sin.
- The only way to "Watch Your Mouth" is by the power of the Holy Spirit filling you and your words with the grace, elegance, and love of Jesus Christ.

**\*Hymn** PH 92 "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus  
 I fain would take my stand,  
 The shadow of a mighty rock  
 Within a weary land;  
 A home within the wilderness,  
 A rest upon the way,  
 From the burning of the noontide heat,  
 And the burden of the day.

2 Upon that cross of Jesus  
 Mine eye at times can see  
 The very dying form of One  
 Who suffered there for me;  
 And from my stricken heart with tears  
 Two wonders I confess:  
 The wonders of redeeming love  
 And my unworthiness.

**\*Offering**

Bring your gifts and your talents, bring your sacrifice of praise to the Lord. Bring them with prayers and shouts of thanksgiving, to celebrate God's faithfulness!

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.  
 Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

God, we give today in thankfulness and with the assurance that anything we give will contribute to the continuing growth of your kingdom in the world. Give us wisdom as a church, so that this offering is used for the sharing of your word and the service of your people. In the name of the One that gave us everything we are and have. Amen.

**\*Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

*Minister:*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

*All:*

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

- People who recently had surgeries to install a pacemaker: Tom Mio son, Scott, Bill Fidler, Ben Mabee. We pray for their recovery.
- Cindy's nephew Scott who started hospice care.

For the church throughout the world, that we may follow Christ our Head, and be blameless in living the gospel of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.

For the nations of the world, that all may live without fear of oppression, poverty, or war, let us pray to the Lord.

For the leaders of the nations, that they may honor justice, protect the weak, and serve the common good

For our communities and neighborhoods, that all may dwell in harmony

For our enemies, that we may find reconciliation with them for the sake of Christ

For all who are sick and in trouble, especially N., that they may find healing and peace

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, offered in steadfast faith and hope in your care for us. For we ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

**Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

**\*Hymn** PH 263 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blest, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;  
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above  
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;  
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;  
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,  
And wither and perish; but naught changeth Thee.

4 Thou reignest in glory, Thou rulest in light,  
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;  
All praise we would render; O help us to see  
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

**\*Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

**Postlude** David's Lyre Brass Sextet

(please be seated for the postlude)

**David's Lyre Brass Sextet**

Trumpet:	Dave Jarrett
Trumpet:	Don Ellington
French Horn:	Michele McClary
Baritone:	Wayne Jones
Euphonium:	Jerry Reese
Tuba:	Jim Moore