

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Stop Kidding Yourself
James 1:19-27
Part Eleven

The theme of James is “Tests of Living Faith”! This epistle was written so that we might know whether we are saved or not saved. The first test that we find in this epistle is the “The Response to Trials test.” This test is found in **James 1:2-18**. We have now begun to consider the second test which is “The Response to the Word test” in **James 1:19-27**. A proper response to the Word involves a “proper reception” in **VV. 19-21** and a life characterized by “active obedience” in **VV. 22-27**.

As we have explored this area of “active obedience”, we have looked at the “demand for it” in **VV. 22-25** and we are now looking at specific “illustrations of it” in **VV. 26-27**. The very first area that we have looked at is the speech area. Let us look at **V. 26** **“If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.”** One area that active obedience must be manifested is in the area of our speech; the way we talk; the way we communicate. But if we find ourselves being unchanged by the Word in this particular area, then we are in trouble. A religion that does not transform the heart, and thereby the tongue, James tells us is totally worthless in the sight of God.”

What does it mean practically for us to bridle our tongue? Certainly it would involve putting off certain speech patterns while putting on others. Over the past several weeks we have considered certain areas of speech that need to be put off or abandoned. The areas of speech that we mentioned were blasphemous speech, filthy speech, lying speech, complaining speech, boastful speech, angry speech and careless speech. After considering these particular areas of speech, we have now begun to consider areas of speech that need to be put on.

In helping us to do this I am using an ACRONYM A-C-T-S.... As we consider each letter of this ACRONYM, I will make an application to our speech as it applies to God and then I will make a similar application as it relates to man. We began last week by considering the letter A.

The letter “A”

As it applies to God, the first area of speech that needs to be added is ADORATION. Adoring speech is the outflow of our redeemed spirit contemplating God’s holy perfections addressed to him in prayer (Ps. 100).

As it applies to man, the first area of speech that needs to be added is APPRECIATION. Appreciative speech is any speech that communicates to people that we value them for who they are (1 Pet. 2:17). WE NOW ARE GOING TO THE SECOND LETTER OF THE ACRONYM.

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The Letter C

As it applies to God, the second area of speech that needs to be added is CONFESSIO. In **1 John 1:9** it says, **“If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** What does it mean to “confess” (HOMOLOGOMEN)? The word translated “confess” is from the greek word (HOMOS) meaning “the same” and the word (LEGO) which means “to say.” To confess means “to say the same thing thing as another,” or “to agree with another,” to admit the truth of an accusation.” Therefore confessing speech is any speech directed to God that acknowledges our sin and agrees with Him concerning it.

So when we bridle our tongue and come to God in prayer to confess our sin, what would be the type of things that we would be saying or at least thinking if we are in fact truly confessing?

First of all, we will in essence be saying that we abhor the sin that we have committed and not only that sin but we abhor all sin. What does **Hab. 1:13** say? The prophet Habakkuk, speaking to God, says, **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.....”** When we come into the Lord’s presence to confess our sin we should not be doing this just simply because we have messed up and are checking off the confession box. It is because we truly hate sin and we hate the sin which we have committed and are therefore agreeing with God. We are saying the same thing about sin that God would say about sin. I know that as we grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus that our hatred of sin will grow, but this does not alter the fact that when we approach God to confess our sin, we need to be in essence saying that we abhor the sin that we have committed.

Secondly, we would certainly come to the Lord in essence saying we are determined never to repeat that sin or any other sin again. This, of course, would be a natural outflow of our hatred of sin. And certainly this is what the Lord would expect from us as we would approach him in confession. What does **Prov. 28:13** say? **“He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.”** We cannot come to the Lord with the attitude that today I am sorry for my sin, but at the same time have no intention of forsaking the sin in the future. If we are approaching God in this way, while we are supposedly confessing sin we are not saying the same thing about sin that God is saying and therefore we are not truly confessing. I am not saying that we may not sin again but I am saying that when we are confessing our sin, our heart’s desire and our hope would be to never sin again.

Thirdly, if we are saying the same thing about sin as God, we will be prepared to do whatever is necessary to clean up the mess that we might have made and to make sure that we will not make the same mess all over again. What does **2 Cor. 7:10-11** say? **“For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. (11) For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!**

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In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.” If we are saying the same the thing as God about sin we will spare no personal expense to correct whatever we have done wrong and we will expect no favors. If I have behaved badly, should I now expect people to behave well toward me? I should be willing to suffer whatever consequence that comes my way because of my sin and suffer it gladly.

I believe that we see all of these various elements of confession in David’s prayer in **Ps. 51:1-10** **“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. (2) Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (3) For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. (4) Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou does speak, and blameless when Thou doest judge. (5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. (6) Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom. (7) Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (8) Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. (9) Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. (10) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”** Do we see him expressing his abhorrence of sin? Yes. Look at how many times he refers to his sinfulness- over and over again. He did not look on his evil lightly. Do you see him wanting to be set free from his sinfulness? Yes! Look at how many times and in how many ways he expresses his desire to be clean and to have a new heart. Do we see him willing to take his lumps for his sinfulness? Yes! THIS KIND OF PRAYING IS LIFE CHANGING.

Consider the speech areas that we have already considered. Let us look back just to last week and once again consider what we learned. Let me ask you a question: “How are we to come into the Lord’s presence?” **Ps. 100** tells us that we are to, **“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise.”** When we come to the Lord in prayer we are not to come into his presence focused on ourselves and our needs but rather on Him and His glory. This certainly does not always have to be expressed in words but it needs to be present. If we are coming into His presence in a manner that is contrary to the teachings of the scriptures and if this is what characterizes our prayer life, it is sin. If we in fact were convicted of this last week and if we in fact have truly confessed our sin and we have seen our sin as God sees our sin, there is no way that we would not be changed by that experience. There is no way that we would not have taken immediate steps to approach the Lord in a more honoring way. Confession of sin is not a bad thing it is a wonderful thing; it is a necessary thing.

The more we are engaged in this area of true confession the more likely we will see significant and long lasting positive changes in our lives. And the less we are engaged in this area the less likely we will be to see significant and long lasting positive changes in our lives.

But what happens if we, as believers, come to the Lord and confess our sins in the way that we have just described for the 100th time could He finally get fed up with us as believers and hold that sin against us? Saying, “No way, Jose.” Of course, the answer to that question is absolutely not.

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When Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary He solved the sin problem once for all. This is why we read in **1 John 1:9** these words, **“If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”** If the Lord did not receive us in the way that is being described in this verse, He would not be **“faithful or just.”**

There is a very important theological word that we need to understand and that is the word “justification.” Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect to the sinner. For me personally, this took place almost 35 years ago. I was justified when I accepted the truth of the gospel and was willing to entrust myself to Jesus alone for my salvation, receiving Him as my Savior and my Lord.

At that moment in time, all of my sins past, present and future, are forgiven and they are cleansed. Never again will I, as a Christian, need to seek forgiveness of God for any sin in order to secure a right standing before the Lord. My standing from that day 35 years ago to this day and throughout eternity will always be the same. This is why Paul could say in :

Rom. 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Because of the truthfulness of this statement, Paul could go on to say in Romans 8:32-39 that there was absolutely nothing that could threaten his relationship with Christ.

Rom. 8:32-39, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? (33) Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; (34) who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) Just as it is written, “For thy sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” (37) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. (38) For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The reason why Paul could feel this secure, the reason why I can feel this secure is because there is not a sin that I have committed, or am committing or ever will commit that has not been paid for at the cross of Calvary.

If I come to the Lord a 100 times or a 1000 times and genuinely confess my sins, the Lord will receive me. When I come to the Lord to receive His forgiveness for the sins which I have committed, I know that He will embrace me. Why? Because the Lord once and for all dealt with my sin in such a way that I am no longer subject to the demands of the law.

If this is so, then why do I, AS A CHRISTIAN need to confess my sin? It has nothing to do with securing my salvation; that has already been done. It has nothing to do with keeping my salvation. Rather it has everything to do with enjoying a vital and dynamic relationship with our heavenly Father.

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When we choose to sin AS A CHRISTIAN, we have chosen to rebel against God very much in the same way a disobedient child would choose to rebel against their parents. And this disrupts the family. And certainly this is true of the family of God. The flow of good things such as the fruit of the Spirit is cut off from us as a natural consequence of our rebellion. This results in the loss of Spirit-empowered love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, which is a horrible thing. But even though this loss is a horrible thing it does not compare to the loss we feel in respect to our communion with the Father.

We are no longer able to express to Him our love for Him, for all that He is and all that He has done for us. For the simple reason that our rebellion makes any such expression a mockery, and we know it. We know what the scriptures teach, which is if we truly love Him we will obey Him. When we choose to sin we give up so much and what do we get in return.

We feel guilt and rightfully so because we have sinned. We feel soiled and rightfully so because we have chosen to wallow in the mud hole of sin.

This is not how we want to live. If we have rebelled against God, let us come and confess our sin. Let us enter into the benefits of all that God has done for us at the cross. Let us once more bathe ourselves in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the forgiveness and the cleansing which is ours in Christ Jesus through His cross.

CONCLUSION

Therefore let us all purpose to bridle our tongues so that we might confess our sin to the Lord. How often do you find yourself confessing sin to God? How often do you approach God in the way we have just described.? How often do you find yourself approaching the Lord to talk to Him about your sin and to say the same thing about your sin that God says about your sin? Hopefully, your answer is “often.” If it is, then praise God!! If your answer is “rarely”, then you need to face the fact that you are spiritually anemic. If fact if your answer is “never”, it may even be possible that you are not a Christian at all.

The communion service which we will be celebrating tonight is designed to promote the very thing that we have been talking about A REMEMBRANCE THAT WILL LEAD US TO CONFESS ANY SIN THAT WE MIGHT BE CONSCIOUSLY AWARE OF.