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Stop Kidding Yourself James 1:19-27 Part Sixteen

The theme of James is “Tests of Living Faith!” This epistle was written so that we might know whether or not we are 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 are now considering 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 in is 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, we are in trouble. James in essence in **V. 26** is saying to us, “A so-called faith that does not transform our speech is 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 months 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.

To help us in this area I have been using an ACRONYMA-C-T-S. As we have considered each letter of this ACRONYM, I have made an application to our speech patterns as it applies to God and then I have made a similar application as it relates to man. We are now on the very last letter of the acronym, the letter S. And this morning we will be considering the last speech pattern that needs to be added as it relates to man.

Not only do we need, in our communication with man, to make sure that we are taking time to express appreciation, conciliation, and thanksgiving as we seek to bridle our tongue, but we need to also make sure that we are taking time to add saving speech. This is the last and final speech pattern that we will consider as it applies to man.

SAVING SPEECH

Let us begin by defining “saving speech.” Saving speech is any speech that is intended to lead people to salvation. When we are talking with unsaved people, hopefully we are bridling our tongue in such a way that our speech will be purposed to help those people come to a saving knowledge of Christ. This weekend I would like to address the question, What do we need to know concerning saving speech if we are going to be successful at bridling our tongue?

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Hopefully, as we consider these very basic but important truths, we will find ourselves being stimulated to take an even more active role in the way we communicate with people about spiritual truth.

THE NEED FOR MESSENGERS

What do you see when you look out over the people of this world? Your answer to this question may vary from situation to situation, in a specific sense. But hopefully your answer would always be the same in a general sense, and that answer would be "as sheep without a shepherd." We need to see the world as in need of someone, a shepherd, who will meet their real needs at their deepest level.

Isn't this how Jesus saw the world? **Matt. 9:35-36** tells us, **"And Jesus was going about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (36) And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd."** Jesus saw the world as needy. He saw the world as needing someone to come alongside of them to meet their real needs and to satisfy the deepest longings of their soul.

And who is that someone that people so desperately need? The world needs to be introduced to the Good Shepherd who is called Jesus. In **John 10:11-15** Jesus said to His disciples the following words, **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. (12) He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters them. (13) He flees because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep. (14) I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."** The advantage of knowing Jesus as our good shepherd is all of our needs are met at their most basic level and we are fully satisfied.

In **Ps. 23** it begins with these wonderful words, **"The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want"** If you are here this morning and you know Jesus as your Shepherd then you know the truth of the statement, **".... I shall not want."** When the Lord is caring for us and ministering to our needs, we are fully satisfied. We are at peace with Him, we are at peace with ourselves, and we are at peace in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

But this is not true of the world in general. They are distressed and downcast. Why? Because **"they are like sheep without a shepherd."** This is hopefully how you view the world, because this is truly the condition of the world. Every time you see someone who does not enjoy a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, hopefully this is how you will see them. They may be rich. They may be powerful. They may be attractive. They may be well-liked. But if they do not know Jesus as their shepherd, they are needy. But it does not have to remain that way. People can go and tell them that there is a shepherd who is inviting them to come to him and find rest for their souls.

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In fact, there is no other way for people to come to the shepherd than by people going and telling them. There is no other way for people to come to the shepherd than by messengers going and telling people to call on the Lord for salvation. Listen to **Romans 10:13-14** “**For whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (14) How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”**

When we go to work and see our unsaved employer, how should we see him or her? You should see him as a sheep without a shepherd. Our heart needs to be moved with the same compassion as Christ’s heart was moved within Him. When we are talking with our unsaved neighbor, how should we see them? We should see them as a sheep without a shepherd. **AND WHEN WE SEE THE UNSAVED WORLD IN THIS WAY THEN KNOW THAT THEY NEED A MESSENGER TO SPEAK TO THEM. AT THIS POINT SOMEONE MIGHT ASK, "WHO ARE THESE MESSENGERS WHO ARE TO SPEAK TO THIS WORLD?"**

THE IDENTITY OF THE MESSENGERS

Let us go back to **Romans 10:13-14** but this time we will add **V.15**, “**For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. (14) How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”** And now **V. 15** “**And how shall they preach unless they are sent?.....**” The messengers of **Rom. 10** are the “**sent ones.**” And who exactly would that be? In the latter part of **Matt. 28** Jesus is talking to His disciples and in **V. 19-20** He says the following, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**” The disciples of Christ are the ones who have in effect been sent into the world to be the messengers. They are the ones who are to point people to Christ. If you profess to be a believer and claim the benefits of someone who has found salvation, then you must also recognize that with that comes responsibilities. And for you and me that means we are responsible to bridle our tongue in such a way that we are pointing people in our conversations to Jesus so that they may, along with us, become His “**disciples.**” This is not something that we are doing just when we feel like it. This is our mission.

And isn’t this what we see in the early church? I am sure you remember Paul’s commendation of the Thessalonian Church. And one of the reasons for his commendation of them was their enthusiasm in carrying out their mission as the messengers of Christ in a lost world. Listen to the words of **1 Thess. 1:8**, “**For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.**”

The word “sounded forth” means “to trumpet.” Certainly if you are familiar with the trumpet you will know that it is not a subtle instrument. It is not difficult to discern when a trumpet is blowing.

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Obviously these were bold people. They were like blaring trumpets. They were a people who were eager to proclaim the Word. Are you a trumpet of the “truth?” Are you trumpeting the truth to your family? Are you trumpeting the truth to your friends? Are you trumpeting the truth to your coworkers?

I am not sure what you think of when you think of someone trumpeting forth the Word of God. And you might not think of yourself in your wildest dreams as being such a person. But I believe that this is exactly the type of person that you become as you give yourself up to Christ’s control. This leads us to the third thing that we need to know.

THE POWER SOURCE FOR MESSENGERS

In the first few verses of **Acts 1**, Luke is talking about Christ’s post-resurrection ministry among his disciples. And in **Acts 1:8** He gives to His disciples this wonderful promise. “.... **you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**” John the Baptist had announced a future baptism which is recorded for us in all four gospels (**Mt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33**) and now the prophecy would be fulfilled. Jesus had also promised the coming of the Spirit in **John 14:16-18; 15:26-27; 16:7-15**. It would be an endowment of power for the disciples so that they would be able to serve the Lord and accomplish His will. John had spoken about “**the Holy Spirit and fire**” (**Mt. 3:8-11**), but Jesus said nothing about fire. Why? Because the “baptism of fire” has to do with future judgment, when the nation of Israel will go through tribulation.

Obviously **Acts 1:8** is a very important verse. It explains that the power of the church comes from the Spirit and not from man. Therefore we must recognize that we will never be an effective trumpeter of God’s truths apart from the power of the Spirit working in and through us. This is why we are commanded in **Eph. 5:18**, “**Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit.**” How are we filled with the Spirit? We are filled with the Spirit when we yield not a part of our lives but the whole of our lives to Christ. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives through His filling ministry is not a luxury but it is an absolute necessity.

Obviously **Acts 1:8** is a very important verse but there is also a very important word that we need to take note of and that is the word “**witnesses.**” The word “witness” in the book of Acts occurs 29 times as either a verb or noun. Of all the things that we experience through the ministry of the Spirit in and through our lives, becoming witnesses is right up at the top of the list. It is very difficult for anyone who professes to be a believer to say that they in fact are walking in the Spirit and at the same time not bearing witness.

What is a witness? A witness is someone who tells what they know. Not what they think. Not what they feel but what they know to be true. When you are a witness in court the judge is not interested in your opinions, he only wants to hear what you what? KNOW.

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And from the first day we come to Christ as His and become his disciples, we know something. And when we are filled with the Spirit we will inevitably, certainly trumpet it. One of my favorite Bible stories is of a brand new disciple and his trumpeting of what he knew. The story is found in **John 9**. And I would like to read for you this story. This new disciple had just been healed of blindness and his healing had created quite a stir and it says in **V. 8**, **“The neighbors therefore, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” (9) Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” (10) Therefore they were saying to him, “How then were your eyes opened?”** Now listen carefully to what he says. He does not go into some lengthy theological treatise. He simply tells these people what he knows. Or in other words he what? Witnesses to them. **(11) He answered, “the man who is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam, and wash’ so I went away and washed, and I received sight.” (12) And they said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.” (13) They brought to the Pharisees him who was formerly blind. (14) Now it was a Sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. (15) Again, therefore, the Pharisees also were asking him how he received his sight. And he said to them, “He applied clay to my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” (16) Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And there was a division among them. (17) They said therefore to the blind man again “What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes?” And he said, “He is a prophet.” (18) The Jews therefore did not believe it of him, that he had been blind, and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, (19) and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?” (20) His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; (21) but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he shall speak for himself.” (22) His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. (23) For this reason his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” (24) So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.” (25) He therefore answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.” (26) They said therefore to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” (27) He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?” (28) And they reviled him, and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. (29) We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.” (30) The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. (31) We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God fearing, and does His will, He hears him. (32) Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. (33) If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” (34) They answered and said to him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they put him out.** What do you think? Was he bearing witness? Was he trumpeting what he knew to be true and the answer would have to be yes! Has Christ done any less for us than he did for this blind man? And the answer is, of course not!

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Therefore, knowing the need for messengers, and knowing that we have been by God's grace appointed to this task, let us present ourselves as a living sacrifice and be filled with His Spirit so that He might empower us to bridle our tongue to bear witness to all the wonderful and marvelous things we have come to know to be true about Him and what He has done in our lives.