"Deadly Poison"

Scripture: James 3:1-12

A. The tongue causes trouble (vv. 1-2)

- James addresses this issue in early Christian communities.
- Teachers are especially cautioned regarding speech. (v.1)

"We all stumble in many ways…"

B. The tongue will often determine our track (vv. 3-6)

- Horses are controlled by the "bit"
- Ships are steered by the rudder
- The tongue "set's the whole course of one's life on fire…"

C. The tongue can be very treacherous (vv.6)

"It corrupts the whole body…is set on fire by hell."

D. The tongue needs to be tamed (vv. 7-8)

- The tongue is more unruly than a wild animal…no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison.

E. As made in God's likeness, all persons deserve to be spoken to with respect and dignity (vv. 9-10)

F. In search of the tongue-tamer (vv. 11-12)

"Fresh water cannot come from a salt spring"
"...the mouth speaks what the heart is full of" (Matthew 12:34)

WWJD? *What would James do?*

- Step one – repent of sin & surrender our hearts (& tongues) to Christ
- James says, be "*quick to listen…slow to speak"* (1:19)
- James says, keep a tight rein on our tongues (1:26)
- *"Those who guard their lips preserve their lives, but those who speak rashly will come to ruin" (Proverbs 13:3)*
- Consider our words spoken in marriage and family life
- Consider our self-talk
- Grace & forgiveness will be required when words inflict pain

Questions for individual or small group reflections

OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

- How does James describe the tongue?
- What does he say to teachers?
- Recall chapter 1:19 and 26

INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

- Where does God show up in the text?
- What does the text tell us about people (vv. 9-10)

APPLICATION (WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT?)

- How does this passage challenge you?
- What practices do you follow to manage your speech?
- How can you "keep a tight rein of your tongue?
- How is your "self-talk"?

October 25, 2026 | What Would James Do? (Wk 2) Pastor Fred Penney, The Olive Branch