

## City Life Church

April 25

UNTAMEABLE...but not UNREDEEMABLE ~ James 3:2-12

### Introduction

Last week, we began a new series called Me and My Big Mouth!

And Pastor Justin got us started by introducing this idea of being *“Quick to Listen and Slow to Speak”*

And all of us know... that is easier said than done right!

Because we all can probably remember a time when we were not slow to speak and our words rushed out of our mouth doing more harm than good...

And... on the flip side, we have all had those moments too when we wished that someone else had been slow to speak to us... as we felt the sting of their harsh and hurtful words.

Bottom line, we all can relate...

- both in words coming **OUT** of us and words coming **AT** us...
- the problem is... once the words are out there... they are out there!
- there is no taking them back, there is no rewind button... there is no do-over when it comes to our words...

### Scripture Focus

So then, what are we to do then with these BIG mouths we have?

**READ James 3:2-12**

There is so much Truth here that should cause us to PAUSE before we put these mouths of ours into action...

### We should be slow to speak because our mouths are powerful!

And it is kind of crazy that they are, because they are so small in comparison to the rest of our being... but literally as James says our small mouth has the power to make huge impact...

First he makes this clear in verse 2 when he says... *“if you can control what you say... then you would be perfect”*... meaning your mouth has that much influence over the whole judgement of your character...

He uses these examples to describe what he means...

- A bit in a horse's mouth
- A what about the small rudder for a ship...

The point being... a rudder, like a bridle, is insignificant proportionally but has extraordinary power to determine direction and destination

In verse 5 James says, *“So also the tongue...” ... in other words, your tongue is just like that... small... but powerful!*

### We should be slow to speak because our mouths can destroy

James continues in verse 5 *“so also the tongue is a small part of the body and yet it boasts of great things. Behold how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire”*

Just like fire can be good... or fire can destroy... we all know the same is true with what comes out of our mouths... We all have words that have impacted us... some for good... some for not so good...

- If your father told you I believe in you, or I love you, or the day you were born was the best day of my life... words like this built confidence, identity, strength, courage, purpose, belonging in you
- But if you ever heard words like, “I don’t know what I am going to do with you” or “You are in my way” or “You drive me crazy, I wish you were never born...” words like that began the destruction of worth, value, identity and purpose...

So yes, words can be used for good and for evil...

But the sad Truth is... the natural bent of our words is toward the latter...

James goes on to say in verse 6, **“the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity”** meaning the tongue has a tendency toward evil... And what it speaks can be like a small spark that catches wind and creates a raging destructive fire...

Think of the destruction that is often initiated by words.

- Murder can begin with an argument
- Divorce can be initiated by what you say
- War has been started over words.
- How many people trace their sinful life patterns back to words that were spoken over them... or even the words that they said to themselves... words like I am a loser, I am ugly, I am no good at this...

We must understand... words are not only powerful, but they have the power to destroy... not just a part of your life... but actually as James says, **“words can defile the entire being”**

Think of it like this...

- You don’t put a child’s mouth in time out; you put the child in time out.
- You don’t ground a teenager’s mouth; you ground the teenager.
- You don’t divorce the mouth; you divorce the person.
- If you’re a boss, you don’t fire the mouth; you fire the person.

If I could just paraphrase verse 6 and put it in my own words

**Your mouth is enemies favorite toy on the playground...**

And that only makes sense when we consider that we are made in the image of God... how powerful is God’s mouth?

- Very powerful... HE spoke this world into existence... need I say more...

Our mouths were created with power as well... and the enemy knows that... so he likes nothing better than to jump on the tongue of your mouth and play all day long leaving all kinds of destruction as he goes

Sobering Truths... that should give us great pause... being slow to speak

## **We should be slow to speak because our mouths are untamable**

### **READ 7-8**

If we weren’t aware of the depravity of our mouths already... well, there you have it...

These first two Truths are sobering enough... but when we see that our mouths are untamable... it might just make us want to tape them up never to speak again...

See not only does James use the word **“untamable”** to describe our mouths... he uses these as well!

- **Restless evil** - meaning unstable ... like totally unpredictable and bent toward evil... For instance... have you ever said, “I can’t believe I just said that?” or “I can’t believe she said that”
- And **full of deadly poison**

No wonder James says, **“No one can tame the tongue”**

So, if that is really true, and it is... then what are we to do?...

We are actually going to find some great encouragement in a moment... but it is actually going to get a little bit worse before it gets better...

## We should be slow to speak because our mouths can confuse

### Read verses 8-12

The point is... it is super confusing when you are using your mouth for polarizing things

God used James to say, ***“it shouldn’t be this way”***

It shouldn’t have been this way then, and it shouldn’t be this way today either...

But it often is. Let me elaborate on what it might look like...

- When we as believers spend moments each week during worship singing “Jesus we love you” and then we later go home and speak condescendingly and harshly to our family... we are confusing them about the love of Christ
- When we as believers speak at work of being in Church and praising God and then we use our words to subtly slander a coworker... we are confusing our people about what it means to be in the family of God.
- When we as believers stand up in the assembly of the church and teach or preach or share a word of Truth or pray for people and then later get on social media and blast someone or speak profanity or perversion... we are confusing the world about the character of Christ...

James said, ***“can a fountain send out both fresh water and salt water from the same opening?”*** The answer is no... That doesn’t mean that you won’t find a water source that has bitter water... we come across that at times right? But James is talking about something that should have been source of fresh water, and now it has salt water in it too... And what he is saying is they both can’t come from the same place... there has to be two sources there... one perverts the other ... so once people discover that water is not fresh... they won’t go there anymore...

And the same can happen when you are speaking with both praise and evil out of your mouth... eventually... you will confuse people... and you will even confuse yourself... and so eventually people stop trusting you... stop believing you... and before you know it... Your words have brought about destruction in your life... and the lives of those around you...

James says, ***“these things ought not to be this way!”***

- Our mouths were never intended for evil!
- God created our mouths in the image of His mouth to speak forth life!
- But when sin entered the world, Satan started filling our mouths with fire from hell!
- He started perverting the purpose of our mouth for his purpose of destruction...
- James is calling the people of God to live differently!
- To be slow to speak...

**See our mouths may be untamable... but they are not unredeemable!**

And that is the highlight of this whole passage...

You may not see it right on the surface... but meditate on the heart of this Word with the Holy Spirit and He will bring this Truth front and center...

## We should be slow to speak because our mouths can bring LIFE!

- See in the same way that our mouths are powerful for destruction... our mouths are powerful for good
- In the same way that our mouths can destroy... our mouths can build up
- In the same way that our mouths can cause confusion, our mouths can bring clarity
- When our mouths are surrendered to Christ... LIFE can come forth!

**It will take intention! Intention to be SLOW TO SPEAK and we have to learn what that looks like in different scenarios...** Because left to themselves our mouths are full of iniquity, restless and full of deadly poison...

- We can't just ever set them in a room by themselves with no barriers...
- You can't set your mouth in the middle of social media without some controls around it
- That would be like lighting a match and leaving it unattended...
- or like placing a untamed lion in the room and saying oh he is really sweet, he won't bite you...

We would never do that!

- But we might light a fire in a fireplace, close the screen and huddle by it with our family and have sweet moments that are full of LIFE
- We might go to the zoo and spend time observing a lion in all his glory while he is in a cage – that can be a really special moment...

And in the same way, if we will give HOLY PAUSE, to our words and intention them for good... our mouths really can bring forth LIFE...

**See look back at the passage with me... there are several things hidden beneath the surface that can help us to intention our mouths for life...**

### **EMPLOY THE DIRECTOR**

Did you see in verses 3-4 in the examples about the horse and the ship... both had a director...

- For the horse it was the person holding the reigns of the bridle
- For the ship it was the pilot who was directing that rudder

Our mouths may be untamable... but with some holy pause and intention they can be redeemed by employing a director  
We just have to employ the right ONE!

- And who is the right director? It isn't you! And it isn't me!
- This mouth might be in my body but I am not trustworthy enough to direct it... I need to employ the Holy Spirit every day to direct the words that come out of my mouth. Every morning I need to hand him the right to decide what flows out of my lips...

The difference between the horse and ship example, compared to the fire example is that the horse and ship had a director... the fire did not... it was just set on fire by hell!

### **SOURCE OUR MOUTH**

Did you see verses 11 and 12 in the examples about the fountain and trees... both had 1 source?

Our mouths are powerful... but the **SOURCE** determines if our words produce destruction or LIFE  
If we will be intentional to be sourced from LIFE... then that is what will come forth from our lips...

Who is that ONE Source? It isn't you and it isn't me!

The Bible says out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks... so I need the Holy Spirit to be sourcing my heart every day with words of LIFE... these words come from His Word, His presence

## **Conclusion**

We can sum it up in **Three Words**

**REMEMBER...** remember these Truths...

**SURRENDER...** surrender your mouth everyday to being directed and sourced

**CONFESS...** own the fires you have started

And also...

**Live with the attitude that I have the right...**

I am a believer so I have the right to bless with LIFE!

So so powerful!

Life can affect the whole being... .can change the course of someone's life instead of destroying like a forest fire... it can bring life!

Story of how words of **LIFE REVERBERATE!**