

Providence Presbyterian Church  
Men's Bible Study and Fellowship  
Rev. Ronnie Rowe, January 29, 2009

## ***The Christian and the Tongue: Blessings or Curses***

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, 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 things.*

*How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind but not human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. – James 3:1-10*

### **Introduction**

There are many ways that we can give encouragement, consolation and edification through our words, but we are painfully aware that with our words we can hurt, discourage, and tear down others as well. This passage reminds us of this reality and should be a new encouragement and warning to us as we press on in the Christian life.

Obvious areas of life where these truths are immediately and critically applicable...

### **The one who needs to hear these words**

- His profession
- His condition

### **An overview of the concern for the good, right and true use of the tongue (some principles)**

The intense assessment of the use of the tongue

*From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. – Proverbs 18:20-21*

The Lord's hatred of the sinful use of the tongue

*There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers. – Prov. 6:16-19  
(See also Proverbs 8:13)*

The promised blessings associated with this bridled tongue

*Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?*

*Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. – Psalm 34:12-14*

*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; -- I Peter 2:8-10*

The implications in regard to the Spirit’s work in our life

*Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil...29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as it fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. – Ephesians 4:25-27, 29-32*

(See also Ephesians 5:15-21)

The matters of the heart

*How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak... - Matthew 12:33-36*

### **Some application**

What are some of the ways that we become careless and sin in this area?

How can we be more sensitive to and aware of this part of life?

Are there very current patterns in my life that need addressing?

### **Preview of coming studies**