

The Power of Words

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Preacher: Joshua Russell

[0 : 00] Do turn with me to James chapter 3 this week. I'll read the passage for us. And for those who might be new among us, there is an outline of what I'm going to say inside your bulletin.

So hopefully that's helpful if you want to look there. James chapter 3. 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.

[1 : 10] 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, reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

But no 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.

Does a spring pour forth from the same opening, both fresh and salt water?

Can a fig tree my brothers bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. All right, so last week I said that James is all about the power of God's word to bring about wholehearted living faith.

So I wanted to begin this week just by thinking about that context again. Remember the comment in James 1, verse 18. Of his own will, so this is in James' introduction, he lays out all the major themes in the book.

[2 : 30] Of his own will, God brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruit of his creatures.

I think that's just the most wonderful description, isn't it? It's like in the beginning, when God first made everything, he said, let there be light, and there was light. He said, let the earth bring forth living creatures, and all sorts of living creatures appeared, and began to multiply across the world. So God expressed his will by his words, and he brought forth creation. Well, now James is saying that God has a new plan, a plan for a, or maybe it's not a new plan, but it's a plan for a new creation, to bring forth a new creation, and that the Christian person is the first fruits of that new creation.

In other words, we are a foretaste, a glimpse, of what one day the whole of creation is going to be like in every creature. Once again, God is doing his creative work by expressing his will with his words, this time the word of truth, the gospel.

When the gospel is implanted in a person's life, it transforms them, and all of a sudden, in that person, we get a first glimpse of the new creation. Because we get to look at a person who is living under the rule of the Lord Jesus.

[3 : 56] And that is the main thing that is going to characterize the new creation. One day, the whole of creation is going to be under the rule of the Lord Jesus. Everything operating just as he wants it.

But right now, the only place that you can see that is, we see that rule is in the Christian person. We are the first fruits of the new creation. So this is James' way of saying that we are, through the

gospel, we are born again.

Remember in John chapter 3, Jesus told Nicodemus that if anyone would enter the kingdom of God, he must be born again. Or likewise, this is James' equivalent of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians chapter 5.

If anyone is in Christ, new creation. Right? What Paul was saying is, there it is. There's a glimpse of the future.

That is the new world. Right here in this time, you can see it when you see someone in Christ. So what James is saying is that this whole new creation transformation thing, it's not just something that changes the way you think, but actually it changes the way we act, it changes the way we speak, it changes everything about you.

[5 : 11] When the gospel impacts a person's mind, it doesn't just stay in the mind, but it begins to transform them in countless different ways, bringing all our thoughts and emotions, all of our actions under the lordship of Jesus.

Because we are entirely new creatures now. Right? Still human, of course. In fact, truly human. Finally, human.

What we were made to be without all the sin and the corruption that spoils our humanity. Okay, so last week, you remember, James was arguing particularly that living faith, the kind of faith that this gospel brings, that is granted by the word of God, living faith, affects our conduct.

Faith without works is dead, whereas the kind of faith that actually saves us, that faith has built into it all sorts of good works, works of love and obedience to God's law, it's lively.

And now likewise, this week, obviously this passage is all about using our tongues, so James wants to hone in on our speech to remind us that when God's word impacts our hearts and minds, it's not just going to change what we do with our hands, it's going to change what we do with our tongues as well.

[6 : 28] Okay, so let's dive in and take a look at some of the details. You'll notice once again in verse 1, James sets his argument in the context of the judgment day. See verse 1? Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

Let's just have a think about a couple of things here. First of all, notice that we're all going to be judged. We're all going to be judged. Teachers and non-teachers alike. James is not saying that only teachers are going to be judged for the words that they speak.

Now he's saying that all of us will be judged, it's just that teachers will be judged. With greater strictness. It's a comparative. So this lines up exactly with what we read elsewhere in the scriptures.

Think of what Jesus says about the judgment day in Matthew chapter 12 for instance. He said, I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak.

Which is scary stuff, isn't it? Even the throwaway lines, even the casual, careless, words. Jesus is not saying that people won't be judged for the deliberate words that they speak.

[7 : 43] He's saying, of course they'll be judged for those, but we will also be judged just for the throwaway lines. Jesus is going to take into account on the judgment day every word that we have spoken.

And on that day we're either going to be justified in his sight, declared righteous, because our words are righteous, unrighteous, or declared unrighteous, because our words are unrighteous, and we will be punished.

And the second thing to notice about this verse is that James is not addressing teachers.

Sometimes I think that's how this passage is read, but do you notice that James is not addressing teachers here?

He's addressing the whole congregation, saying that not many of you should become teachers, my brothers. So this passage has a lot to say to teachers.

Don't get me wrong, I'm quite well aware of how important this passage is for me. I'm very conscious that I need to take it very seriously. But I just want you to know, because I think it's important to see that James is writing a general letter here.

[8 : 54] He's not writing, this is not one of the pastoral epistles, you know, 1 and 2 Timothy or Titus, he wants to talk to all of us about how we use our tongues and the importance of speech.

So he begins with a warning that not many of us, or we all maybe should think twice before we take up opportunities to kind of waggle our tongues just a little bit more or wield more influence with our

words.

In some ways, I think we are all to varying degrees teachers. You know, whenever we take it upon ourselves to give advice and instruction. I remember giving someone advice when I was just a teenager about how they should dry themselves with a towel after, you know, the shower.

The irony is, my wife consistently criticizes me for not being dry enough. Anyway, we all teach our children, we teach each other, we teach growth groups, we teach congregations.

And James' point is that we should be careful before we open our mouths and presume to inform, lead, train others, influence others.

[10:08] We should be careful because what we say really matters. It makes a big difference to the lives of people around us and ultimately it matters to God.

One day God is going to judge us for what we have said. And those who have particularly wielded more influence and have been in positions of authority, they will, in the same measure, be held more responsible for what they have said.

And verse 2 begins with a 4. So in verse 2, James is going to give us the reason for his warning.

Why should we be so hesitant before we open our mouths or step up into positions of leadership? James says, 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.

So see here, James says, number one, this is a universal problem. We all stumble. And number two, it's a big problem. We all stumble in many ways.

[11:15] Right? So it's not just one or two of us who have this issue. And it's not just that we all fall short kind of here and there, you know, little things. Nobody's perfect. We don't get it quite right.

Now James is saying, we are all hopeless at this. No one, except Jesus, of course, is able to bridle the tongue.

And if someone could, hypothetically speaking, James says, that person would be perfect. That person would be able to bridle their whole body. Right? He's saying that the tongue is the hardest organ in the body to bridle.

If someone could tame the tongue, they'd be able to have everything else under control. So friends, I hope that we are all prepared to admit, honestly, that what James is saying here is true.

Isn't it? Roy mentioned that even five minutes ago maybe, you have some regrets about things that you've said. I'm sure this week, no doubt, you've said some insensitive or unkind things.

[12:18] Perhaps something you said in a burst of anger or grumbling under your breath. The things you say to yourself, they will be accounted for on the judgment day. Do you bicker with your spouse or snap at your kids?

Do you whinge and complain or subtly brag? I know I do. We won't go through them all now, but throughout the book of James, James actually gives us a pretty good survey of our most common speech impediments.

He talks about angry speech, empty speech, boastful speech, slander, lies, grumbling.

It's a pretty damning list. And sometimes, don't you just wish that you could pull the words back in as if you'd never said them? Things just roll off the tongue all too easily.

And once they're out, they're out. And you might regret them, but the damage is done. So having introduced this serious warning in verses 1 and 2, then James starts to give us various images to try and hammer home the point, basically, to illustrate how dangerous the tongue is.

[13:32] The first couple of illustrations are in verses 3 to 5. And James' main point is that the tongue is extremely powerful. In fact, the tongue is disproportionately powerful, exerting considerable influence over our lives, even though it is so small.

So for this reason, he says, the tongue may be compared to a bit in the mouth of a horse or a rudder that guides a ship. Look with me at verse 3. 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. See how these two analogies make two points. First, that the tongue is disproportionately powerful. It is stronger than its size suggests.

And secondly, that the tongue is directive. Right? So horses are large, powerful animals, but just a little thing in their mouths can completely control them and turn them this way and that.

[14:43] Or imagine one of those old Roman galleys, right? Weighing in at a few hundred tons, a mighty wind in the sails, but it is just that little rudder at the back that sets the direction of the whole thing.

So in the same way James is saying that the tongue can direct the course of a person's whole life. One foolish remark might cost you your job or your marriage, ruin your reputation, or years and years of hard work.

Some of you might remember the name Marcus Einfeld. He was at one time a federal court judge of Australia, Queen's Council. He received the Order of Australia. He was recognized as a national living treasure.

I don't know who's giving this kind of recognition, but anyway. Apparently this is an award for people who have made an outstanding contribution to Australian society. And then on the 7th of August 2006, he contested a \$77 speeding ticket.

His car had been caught by a speed camera, traveling at 10km over the speed limit. So he was in a 50km zone, he was going 60km. It was in the Sydney suburb of Mossman.

[15:57] Sydney people, hey? Anyway, now of course, Mossman, yeah, Mossman. Sorry, Renee, sorry. Now, of course, Einfeld should have just paid the fine, but instead he contested the ticket by claiming that he had lent his car to an old friend on that day who was visiting from the United States.

The only problem was that that old friend turned out to have died three years earlier. Now, when he was first confronted about this, he doubled down, right?

He tried to explain further how it had all been a misunderstanding. I won't give you all the details.

He ended up writing a 20-page document about this supposed friend, all the details about her.

But ultimately, he was convicted of perjury. He was stripped of all of his honors. He spent two years in prison. afterwards, Einfeld said, I'm desperately sorry for what I did.

I'm sorry to my family, my elderly mother and my children. I'm sorry to the public at large. I lied. I can't say it any simpler than that. I told a lie, which was a disgraceful thing to do and for which I have been paying ever since.

[17:15] But interestingly, when Einfeld was asked if he was a dishonest man, he said, no, I'm not dishonest, no, I don't think I'm the slightest bit dishonest. I just made a mistake.

They learned his lesson. Now, this is James' point. What we say can dictate the course of our whole lives, for better and for worse, in little ways and in big ways, like the bridle in a horse's mouth or the rudder on a ship.

Our tongue can help us and do great things, or our tongue can hinder us and destroy us. Okay, so into verse 5, James continues his theme that the tongue is small but powerful and it can direct the course of one's life, but this time he turns in a definitely negative direction.

We've been talking about horses and rudders and so on, but these are kind of neutral illustrations, aren't they? But now we're going to talk about a fire. James says, 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. So we're up to point three now in your outline about the destructive power of the tongue.

[18:42] I have to say that last little phrase has really bothered me this week. The word James uses for hell is Gehenna. It's the only time the word occurs in the New Testament not on the lips of Jesus.

So 11 out of 12 times it's Jesus who uses the word Gehenna, but here it's James, he seems to have had a big influence on his little brother. And James seems to use this word in a slightly different way to Jesus though.

I don't know if you noticed that. There are some obvious similarities. So the key one, key similarity is that they both described hell as a place of fire. So in Mark chapter 9 for instance, Jesus says whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to Gehenna or hell to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with

two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. [20 : 09] That's Mark 9 42-48. James and Jesus are clearly on the same page about the fact that hell is a place of fire, unquenchable fire. But I think what's troubled me is that whereas Jesus clearly describes hell as a place of punishment, James seems to be describing it here more as a source of evil.

Did you notice that? So he doesn't say that the tongue will be set on fire by hell. That's true. That's what Jesus says. In fact, in another place, Jesus says, don't fear those who can kill the body but can't kill the soul.

Instead, fear him who has the power to cast soul and body into hell, into Gehenna. So hell is a place where the soul and the body will suffer. But James is not saying that.

Now he is saying that the tongue is set on fire by Gehenna, as if the destructive power of the tongue somehow finds its roots in Gehenna.

Now clearly it's a metaphor. This whole paragraph is a metaphor. The tongue is not literally a fire giving off sparks or anything like that. But still, what's he talking about? Sort of puzzled me, I have to say.

[21 : 24] I think the key phrase though, to help us, is actually at the beginning of the verse. So notice how James describes the tongue as a world of unrighteousness. Now that's an unusual idea, isn't it?

How can the tongue be a world? A whole world? As if it's a place. You know, the tongue is kind of a universe in and of itself. But I think this is where the comparison to hell comes in.

And so for me, I think this week I've been reminded that because hell is such a hard thing to talk about, I don't think about it enough. In particular, I think I myself have been fooled, maybe you two, by a false dichotomy that hell is either a place of punishment or a place of evil.

And I think the scriptures are teaching us that it's both. So you know how sometimes in popular portrayals people imagine that the devil is the prince of hell? You know, and the demons are the ones all punishing people and so on?

And that idea is patently unbiblical. evil. It's so wrong. Again, we just have to read the words of Jesus. In Matthew chapter 25, for instance, on one occasion when Jesus is describing the judgment day, he says to the wicked, depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

[22 : 52] For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you didn't welcome me, and naked and you didn't clothe me, etc. etc. But you notice straight away, don't you, that the fires of hell have been prepared for the devil and his angels, not by them.

In other words, Jesus is the Lord of heaven and hell. He is the one who locks people out of heaven. He is the one who throws people into hell. In fact, in the book of Revelation in chapter 14, the people in hell are said to be suffering in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

Listen to Revelation chapter 14 verse 9, another angel, a third, followed them saying with a loud voice, if anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb.

And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever and they have no rest day or night, these worshippers of the beast and its image and whoever receives the mark of its name.

Okay, so let's be clear on that. The devil is not the Lord of hell. Jesus is the Lord of hell. But having said that, I do think there is some truth to the fact that sinners in hell will be their own punishment.

[24 : 35] And this is what I think James is picking up on, if I can put it like this. Imagine living in a place where everybody is in pain and no one is compassionate. No one is kind.

No one cares for anyone around them. No one is visiting the sick. See, that is the Bible's description of hell, a world of unrighteousness.

No one, although they will regret their life's choices, they won't change fundamentally. I think we talked about this a bit at Mission Minded, didn't we?

One of the reasons I think hell is eternal is because those who are in hell just go on sinning forever and ever and ever never being granted repentance. Repentance is a gift of grace.

None of us would have repented without God's gracious work in our hearts. So I take it that James is saying that the untamed tongue is a little taste of that world of horror now.

[25 : 41] The tongue, metaphorically speaking, is a portal from hell to earth. It's a whole world of unrighteousness bringing all the fires of hell into our societies and relationships now, ruining and ravaging our lives.

So if you want to know a little bit of what hell is going to be like, just look at how much damage people do with their words, with their lies, and gnarly comments. Imagine being surrounded by whinging and whining, and self-righteous, proud words, and angry words, and selfish words, and swear words, and hateful words, all the time, relentlessly, forever and ever.

Now in a sense, verses 7 and 8 are simply reiterating what James has already said, that no human being can tame the tongue. Notice here how he stresses the unique difficulty of it.

We human beings are actually very good at taming things. In fact, I wonder if James is alluding back to Genesis here. We were made to have dominion over all the other creatures, weren't we?

[26 : 53] But because of our sin, our problem is that we can't seem to maintain control over ourselves. And James says the tongue is a restless evil.

It never stops. It's just relentless in its destruction, constantly spewing forth poison. Just think if James could see the world of words that we live in today.

Emails, texts, blog posts, news articles, podcasts, and conversations. It's hard to imagine just how many words are being articulated across the planet every moment, isn't it?

And James is saying that by our words we wreak so much havoc every moment. It was words that initially led us into this mess in the first place.

A lie from a creature we didn't have dominion over. Okay, but there's one more sad point to make about the tongue in verses 9 to 12.

[27 : 55] Lest we think, perhaps, that the good things we might say, that they might save us, James wants to remind us of the tongue's unnatural hypocrisy.

He says, 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 comes blessing and cursing.

My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening, both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

So you'll notice again that James is talking particularly about people in the church, not people out there. It's not the unbelievers out there who are using their tongues to bless their Lord and Father, is it?

No, it's us. We are the ones James is talking about, who need to examine ourselves for any hint of hypocrisy. Religion. Takes us back to James' introduction, doesn't it?

[28 : 54] If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. So James is talking about religious people and the capacity for churchgoers to fool themselves or ourselves into thinking that our religiosity can somehow cover over our sins.

Sitting in church, even preaching in church, going to Bible studies, leading Bible studies, saying our daily prayers. James says that's all worthless.

If when we get up over morning tea, we spread gossip and slander, when we go home we whinge and complain, we backbite and judge each other, we speak rudely or crudely in our workplaces to try and fit in, or we feel like we need to vent sometimes, don't we?

Whatever that is. James is saying if our religion is like that, then we're not fooling God. Of course we're not fooling God. We're only deceiving ourselves.

So in this last section of our passage this morning, James wants to point out the absurdity of blessing God while cursing our fellow human beings. Don't we understand that every person we meet is made in the likeness of God, an image bearer of God.

[30 : 23] In other words, they represent God. They were made to be one of God's ambassadors, if you like, on earth, representing his rule in the world. So whenever we speak about or address our fellow human beings, we are slandering one of his ambassadors.

The way we speak to them, the way we treat them, is it shows what we really think about God. That's what James is saying. Notice also the connection in these verses between the is and the

ought.

See, first of all, James says that we ought not to pour forth blessing and cursing from the same mouth. We can and we do do that, but we ought not to. But then his illustrations are really all about things that cannot happen.

So a spring cannot pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water, and a fig tree cannot bear olives. So what's his point?

I think two things. Number one, a double tongue betrays a double mind. That's the first point he's making. Remember again, going back to the introduction in chapter one, James talks about the double-minded man, unstable in all of his ways.

[31 : 37] This is the man he really wants to take aim at, the man who asks for God's wisdom, but doesn't ask in faith. In other words, he wants to have a foot in both camps.

He wants to live God's way and have God's wisdom when it suits him, you know, and get all the blessings of belonging to God. And then he also wants to live the world's way when it suits him and enjoy all the blessings of belonging to the world.

And James is saying, no, you can't have it both ways. Double-minded religion is worthless. The only kind of religion that God is interested in is, pure religion, and the kind of faith that comes down from above, granted to us by the implanted word.

And once again, this idea is not unique to James. In fact, I think James very much has the words of his older brother and his Lord and Master in mind. Listen, for instance, to what Jesus taught in Luke chapter 6, verses 43 to 45, about the connection between the mouth and the heart.

he says, for no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

[32 : 51] The good person, out of the good treasure of his heart, produces good, and the evil person, out of his evil treasure, produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.

So the first thing James is saying is that the heart and the mouth are connected. A poisonous mouth is the sign of a poisonous heart. A double tongue is the sign of a double mind. The second thing I think James is saying is that a drop of poison, or a bit of salty water, has the effect of spoiling and polluting the whole thing.

So if you can imagine a spring that pours forth salt water and pure water at the same time, the pure water is not going to stay that pure for very long, is it? It's not as if the pure water is going to purify the rest.

No, the salty water is going to contaminate the pure water. So in the same way, James is saying that our religion has to be pure. Unless we are purifying ourselves completely, or the word of God is at work in us doing that, getting rid of sin completely in our lives, then our sin will destroy us completely.

A double mind is an unstable situation, if you like. It's not going to stay double for long. It's going to go one way or the other. Saturated by righteousness, purified, or saturated by wickedness.

[34 : 24] words. All right, so time to wrap up. As we close, I want to return to where we began by thinking about the power of God's word.

See, for the most part, this passage is about the power of our words, isn't it? And I imagine that that's not too controversial. I'm sure we all know the power, the great power of our words.

Words have the power to do good and the power to do evil. Words can build up and encourage and teach and warn. Words can inspire. Sometimes a single sentence can turn a marriage, a friendship, a classroom, a whole church, in the right direction.

But of course, James has been focusing us on the destructive power of words and the hopeless state we find ourselves in because we all stumble in many ways.

Trying to tame the tongue is like trying to tame Leviathan. It just can't be done in human strength. Because that is the key, isn't it? James' aim is not to leave us hopeless and despondent.

[35 : 34] His aim is to encourage us to give up on ourselves and our own strength and to throw us back in faith on the power of God and the power of God's word.

God's word. James is saying, brothers and sisters, if you want to tame your tongue, your only hope is a new heart. And the only thing that can give you a new heart is the word of God.

The gospel that Jesus is Lord and the royal law written on our hearts in the new covenant. What we need, brothers and sisters and friends, I don't know if there are any non-believers visiting us here this morning or not yet believers, you're very, very welcome.

What James is saying applies equally well to all of us. James is saying, what we need, if we are ever to tame our tongues, is the power of God's word, the gospel, ruling our hearts.

We need to have the Lord Jesus ruling over us. Just as one day he is going to rule over the whole of creation. See, we don't have the power in ourselves to tame our tongues.

[36 : 57] But when God speaks his living word into someone's heart, it really does have the power to change. Not only their minds, but God's word changes the way we use our hands, the places our feet take us, the things our eyes look at, and it changes our tongues.

apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. Apart from Jesus, you have no hope of taming your tongue. Can a salt spring produce fresh water?

No. Neither can a thin enslaved heart bring forth God honoring, loving, and gracious speech.

church. So what we need, friends, is to turn our hearts over to Jesus, wholly and completely.

Let Jesus sit on the thrones of our hearts, and take the reins of our tongues, and guide our whole lives, so that we can speak life-giving words of grace and truth, just like he himself did speak.

Isn't it beautiful to see the way the Lord Jesus speaks in all the gospel accounts? Our tongues expose our true selves, what we truly think and feel and believe.

[38 : 16] So if our tongues aren't saturated by righteousness, then that tells us something about our hearts. Honestly, I could hardly believe it when our good friend Einfeld, the judge, said, no, I'm not dishonest.

No, I don't think I'm the slightest bit dishonest. I just made a mistake. That's hilarious. I mean, what planet is he on? Of course, we all think to ourselves the same way, don't we?

You know, sure, sometimes I do bad things, but I'm not a bad person. James is saying, no, let's not deceive ourselves. The bad things we say and do, guess where they come from?

They all proceed from our hearts. So if we are going to be saved, both now and on the judgment day, what we need is a total renewal and transformation from within and that can only come to us by the living and powerful word of God.

So let's pray. Almighty creator and gracious heavenly father, we praise you for your living word which speaks to us today.

[39 : 36] Oh Lord, by it, please soften our hearts and transform us so that we might live under the lordship of Jesus, our saviour and king. And instead of poisonous, destructive words rolling off our tongues, things, please enable us to speak life-giving words of grace and truth to build each other up.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.