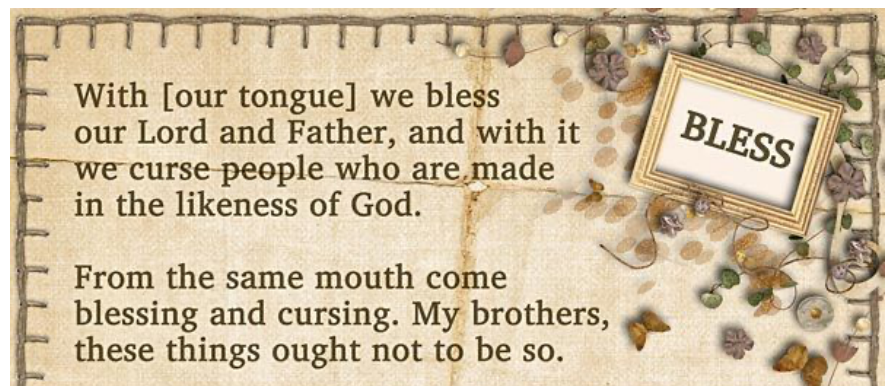


THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
Theme: "The Testing of Your Faith"

Lesson: 23
Text: 3:7-10
Date: 8-20-23

Trinity Lutheran Church
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TEXT AND STUDY NOTES

- (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,
(8) but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

(Gen 1:26-31; Ps 140:3; Eccl 10:11; Mark 7:33-37; Rom 3:13-19; Col 3:8)

(9) With it **we bless our Lord and Father**,
and with it we curse people who are made **in the likeness of God**.

(10) From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.
My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

**(Acts 2:25-28; Rom 10:8-10; 14:11;
Eph 6:19; Php 2:9-11; 1 Cor 11:7; 1 Pet 3:8-11)**

Commentary on James – "The Epistle of Faith" – Dr. David Scaer - CPH

In spite of sin, man can still exercise the dominion given him by God over the animal creation. "For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed . . . by humankind" (3:7) is a direct reflection of God's decision to make man lord over creation. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). The tongue is the one thing over which man is incapable of exercising dominion. In fact, just the opposite is true. The tongue exercises dominion over the speaker and, left unchecked, eventually brings him and his listeners to damnation.

By referring to the tongue's blessing of the Lord and Father, James is showing the discrepancy between the formal liturgy of the Christian synagogue worship conducted by these pastors and the cursings normally coming out of their mouths (3:9).⁶ A theological discrepancy is caused because men in their creation as God's image resemble Him but fail to see the image in others. The early church clergy were guilty of this. As in the reference to controlling all creatures, James with the image of God in man again is commenting on Gen. 1:26-27. Again the theme is repeated that a Christian cannot have one attitude to God and another to God's human creatures.

Perhaps James is here referring to ordinary banal cursing. But there could be an allusion to the type of preaching going on in the congregation, in which some people were led to the impression that they were unworthy of God's salvation. These preachers may have taken to themselves the eschatological prerogatives of Christ in sentencing the damned (Matt. 25:41). Within the same church service, the same preaching praised God and then uttered sharp condemnatory messages on the congregation. This explains that "from the same mouth come blessing and cursing" (3:10).

James views the tongue as a fire and as that member of the body, that is, the church, which can bring it to the destruction of hell. In Matthew fire is understood as hell's punishment for unbelievers. This is true of the preaching of John the Baptist (3:10-12) and then later of Jesus' preaching in the Sermon on the Mount (5:22) and the Kingdom parables (13:40, 42). James sees the tongue as both the source of fire and a fire set and controlled by hell. The

tongue is hell's instrument in time. Understanding of fire as judgment is common to John the Baptist, Jesus, and James. James' understanding of the tongue as part of the body which, left unchecked, can destroy the body is similar to Jesus' warning of the Christian to rid himself of an offending eye or hand if its continued sin results in the damnation of the total body (Matt. 5:29-30).

LIFE APPLICATION

"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."

Consider the beauty of the confession the creeds,
singing the hymns, psalms and liturgy
each Sunday together with our own mouths and the mouths of others!