



SERIES: FEBRUARY – MARCH FAITH IN REAL LIFE

SPEAKER: JACOB WIRKA

Thursday, 03/10/2022

Scripture: James 3:9-12

TITLE: What Are You Talking About?

Have you ever heard the phrase "don't talk about it, be about it"? As best I understand it, this often applies to situations where people talk a big game but don't follow through and don't live out the things they talked about. This is interesting because as we look at the book of James, we learn that in many ways, the things we talk about or the way we talk reflect the things that we are really about. These are the things we believe.

Let's take a look at James 3:9-12 (ESV),

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 saltwater? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Now for some context, in the previous passage, James just finished explaining how a person's evil tongue can spread a sinful poison as fast as a wildfire, just with our words! James picks up with this thought in verse 9, examining the double-minded nature or inconsistency that many of us experience with how we use our words. One minute we use our words to worship the Creator of everything, and the next minute we use our words to curse the human beings that God created for his glory!

This could look like praising God, singing worship songs in church in one moment, and then using our words to yell at or tear down friends and family members an hour later. In simplest terms, Jesus identified the greatest commandments as loving God with everything you have and loving other people as much as we love ourselves. So we have to ask the question, if we don't display love for other people with our words, can we truly claim that we love the God that they reflect as image-bearers?

Now, to be honest, this is something we all struggle with. One moment we can speak kindly to a person's face and immediately turn around and talk badly about them behind their back. This is a part of our fallen nature, and even the Apostle Peter himself struggled to be consistent with his words and actions. We know through the Gospels that Peter used his tongue to confess that Jesus was the true Messiah, the Son of the living God. Peter later used that same tongue to curse Jesus and deny that he ever knew Him in His greatest hour of need. Once again, we see that our tongues are powerful and that the words we speak are often a reflection of our hearts that continue to wrestle with good and evil or with blessing and cursing.

In verse 11 of James 3, James begins to talk about how saltwater and freshwater can't come from the same source. This illustrates that the words we speak come from deep down within our hearts. Saltwater is bitter, and if we tried to drink it to survive, we would die. James is making the point that bitter, evil words come from a bitter heart.

James goes on a 12 to illustrate how certain plants can only produce certain fruits. In the same way that a fig tree can't produce olives, bad things don't produce good things. Evil things don't produce righteous things. So if you want to know where our hearts are really at, we should examine what sorts of things are we producing. What types of words come out of our mouths? If we are constantly producing bitter and evil words, we must confront the fact that much bitterness and evil still reside in our hearts. True, godly, genuine words that come from the heart have been changed by the Gospel. So if we want to produce "fresh water," as James puts it, then our hearts must experience the living water that comes from experiencing the forgiveness and truth of Jesus himself.

The more consistently we walk with Jesus, the more consistently we will talk like Jesus, and that's because, from the inside out, we are becoming more like Jesus!