

“The 2 Ounce Beast!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. James still helping us to discover a “*genuine faith*” or a *Functioning Faith* (Active Faith; Intentional; Authentic; Real; Expressive; Demonstrative; Gushing; Friendly; Affectionate Faith)
1. He now adds a more specific manifestation of faith expressed through the self-control of our **speech** & the origin of our **wisdom**.
- B. **Q:** Can you name the muscle in your body that receives more exercise & less control than any other? [The tongue weighs only 2 oz.; it has 8 muscles to change its position; aprox 4” long]
1. It helps us to *chew, taste, swallow, & articulate words*.
 2. It also is used for *deceit, destruction, it devours, it is sharp sword, it breaks bones*(Prov.25:15), *backbites, flatters, & poisons*.
 3. So it also is known as, “*The 2 oz. Beast!*” (Title)
 4. It’s this *beastly nature* that James address in this passage.
- C. But is it our **literal tongues** that are the real problem?
1. **Read** Mt.15:11;17-19
 2. The tongue is neither friend **nor** foe. It’s merely a *messenger* that delivers the dictates of a desperately sick heart.
 3. So when James uses **tongue**, think **heart**.
- D. Quaker Proverb, “Of your **unspoken** words, you are the **master**; of your **spoken** words, the **servant**; of your **written** words, the **slave**.”

II. **THE 2 OUNCE BEAST!**

- A. **TEACHERS & TONGUE DISEASE!** (1,2) [Outline taken from Charles Swindoll]
- B. (1) Don’t be too eager to teach the Scriptures, as teachers use their tongues often.
1. They have more opportunities to misrepresent the Scriptures & thus incur a stricter judgment.
 2. The tongue is powerful, for good or evil.
- C. So is James condemning teaching? No,...
1. **First**, James is only *warning against* rushing into the profession w/o carefully weighing the cost & responsibility.

- a) The words teachers *sow* will affect many lives.
- b) Their tongue is *the tool of their trade*, and teachers must master this tool!

2. **Second**, James is not promoting *silence*; he's proposing **control**!

D. (2) **We all have a hard time controlling our tongues!** If you disagree with that statement then you are a **liar** or at least *in disagreement with Scripture*.

E. **SMALL BUT POWERFUL!** (3-5)

F. The power of the tongue in **3 Illustrations**:

1. **A bit** - With a length of rope, or a few strips of leather & a small piece of metal in a horse's mouth, a rider can control the horse's whole body.
 - a) The *tongue* is a **bit**, a small, 2 ounce bit nestled in our mouths that controls the direction of our lives.
2. **A small rudder** - Ships have grown larger & heavier but still proportionately they still have their course determined by a comparatively small slab of metal called a rudder.
 - a) The **rudder** of the human body is that small slab of muscle called the tongue.
3. **A little fire** - A tiny spark holds the power to destroy 1000's of acres of forest.
 - a) Such is the power of the tongue. *Held in check such power for great good. Out of control what havoc both can cause.*

G. So, have you ever seen (if not picture): a **horse** running out of control; a **ship** out of control; **A fire** out of control; someone's **mouth** out of control.

H. **NECESSARY BUT DANGEROUS!** (6-8)

I. (6) **A world of iniquity(sin)?** - James means that *the whole world of evil* can find its expression through the tongue.

1. *i.e.* Boastful, destructive anger, cutting bitterness, flattering lust...**the tongue communicates them all.**

J. (6b) **It's set on fire by Gehenna** - *Gehenna*, that actual valley outside Jerusalem used as a garbage dump.

1. **All the filth** of the city accumulated there, **just as** the evil of our sinful hearts seems to accumulate on our tongues.

K. (7,8a) James changes image one more time.

1. You see this truth at any *Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus*.

2. Over the years we've been able to train *Gentle Ben*, *Lassie*, *Flipper*, *Shamu*, *even Barney!*
 - a) But there's one beast not even *PT Barnum* could tame...the tongue!
- L. (8b) Click the shutter one more time for our last illustration...it is an unruly/restless evil & full of deadly poison.
1. Our tongues are like the forked menace of a poisonous snake. We strike & poison those around us.
 2. Remember Hitler's words when he *bared his fangs* against Christianity? "Nothing will prevent me from tearing up Christianity, root and branch... We are not out against a hundred-to-one different kinds of Christianity, but against Christianity itself. All people who profess creeds...are traitors to the people. Even those Christians who really want to serve the people...we have to suppress. I myself am a heathen to the core."
 - a) This same venomous hatred later resulted in *Zyclon B*, the poisonous gas used to kill millions at *Auschwitz* & other concentration camps.
- M. **HELPFUL BUT INCONSISTENT!** (9-12)
- N. The tongue is a powerful, dangerous beast, but remember that we said only *sometimes*.
1. Sometimes it helps **mend** bones instead of **breaking them**;
Sometimes it **builds up people** instead of **tearing them down**;
Sometimes it brings **life** instead of **death**.
- O. (9,10) In these verses James illustrates the *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde* tongues tendency.
1. The 1931 horror film where a man who takes a potion which turns him from a *mild-mannered man* of science into a *crude homicidal maniac*.
 2. **Illustration:** A large family sat around the breakfast table one morning. As the custom, the father returned **thanks**, blessing God for the food. Immediately after, however, as was his bad habit, he began to **grumble** about hard times, the **poor quality** of the food he was forced to eat, the way it was **cooked**, and much more. His little daughter interrupted him, "Dad, do you suppose God heard what you said a little while ago when you were giving thanks?" "Yes," the father replied with the confident air of an instructor. "And did He hear what you said about the bacon and the coffee?" "Of course," replied the father with a note of caution in his voice." Then his daughter asked, "Dad, which did God believe?"
 - a) Of course the answer is both, because both reveal the real condition of the heart.

- P. (11,12) Lastly, James shows how the nature of the human heart is like *nothing* in nature!
1. Unlike human kind, nature is consistent. Peach trees don't produce poisonous mushrooms. Only the human heart is capable of producing such inconsistencies.
- Q. Streams produce 1 kind of water; Trees produce 1 kind of fruit.
1. The speech of the believer should be consistent with his/her new life in Christ.
- R. "Open your mouth & say ahhh!" - a doctor often looks *behind* the tongue.
1. We need to look all the way down to the **heart!**
- S. Again, the **tongue** isn't the real problem; it is the **heart**. (Mt.12:34-37)
- T. Who is in control?
1. If your tongue is under God's control, you will take what you say seriously(1), & your whole body will be under His discipline(2).
 - a) Just as a **horse** needs a rider holding its reigns, & a **ship** needs a pilot at the rudder, so **your tongue** needs a master; & **God** is the only one who can do the job.
 2. Ps.141:3,4 **Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil.**

More people have been slain by the tongue than the sword.

Bridle our tongues today & we'll be able to handle the rest of the horse.

A short intellect usually has a long tongue.

Mt.5:21,22

Murders Root & Fruit (beg. & ending)...are *Anger!*

3 degrees of Anger:

[1] **Anger**, as a non-verbal *concealed* emotion

(Yet it's not really concealed; w/God it's a heart Revealed!)

[2] **Raca**, Anger as a verbal *outburst*. Now it's directed to the person!

(raka - Raca) = fool, empty headed. Not Latin or Greek hard to interp (It's Aramaic).

Chrysostom(& Augustine) say the word means *nothing*, but rather express "the emotion of an angry mind".

[A word that can't be translated into another language, like Aahh! Ssss! Tsic(tongue on teeth sound)! So, the writer puts down the word itself!]

[3] **You Fool**, Anger as an outburst, but now w/intent.

Like: "Your a fool!", "Your a real Jerk!", "I wish you were dead!", "Lets' get a Divorce then!", "I wish we never even had you!", "I wish you weren't my parents!"

Raca deals w/contempt for a mans *head* - "You Stupid"!

Fool expresses contempt for his *heart & character*, "You Scoundrel"!