The Use of the Tongue
James 1:26-27; 3:8-12

Introduction:
A. Freedom of religion and speech are great *civil* liberties.
   1. It means that government grants and protects our right to openly believe or say what we please.
   2. It does not mean that the same permissions are granted by God.
B. God has much to say about what we can or cannot believe or say.
   1. God tells us what we can and cannot believe and practice in religion.
   2. God also tells us what we can and cannot say with his blessing and approval.
C. James shows that the same tongue is often, but should not be, made to produce two opposite fruits.

Discussion:
I. Blessing.
   A. It can be used to directly bless God.
      1. It can confess faith in the Christ (Rom. 10:9, 10)
      2. It can worship God (Heb. 13:15) – Sing, pray, teach/preach.
   B. It can be used to bless man.
      1. Preach the gospel to him (Rom. 1:15, 16; Mark 16:15, 16)
      2. Warn and rebuke him in danger (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Tit. 2:10-13)
      4. Promote peace between men (Matt. 5:9; Matt. 18:15-17).

II. Cursing.
   A. It can be used to serve the purposes of hell (v. 6)
      1. Profanes the holy name of God and curses.
      2. Promotes false doctrines (2 John 9-11).
      3. Produces sin when overactive (Prov. 10:19)
   B. It can be used to curse man.
      1. Ruins good names by lies, insinuation, and revealed secrets (Prov. 11:13)
      2. Unnecessarily hurts people (Prov. 18:8)
         a. “But it is the truth” – yes, but is it necessary – may be at times (3 Jno. 9; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15)
         b. “But, I said it to his face”
      3. Promotes strife (Prov. 26:20) – in nations, families, communities and churches.
   C. It often reveals the true character of its owner. (cf. Matt. 12:34-37)
      1. Foul language reveals sinful desires and designs.
      2. Constant criticism often reveals envy and insecurity – thinks pulling other down lift self.
      3. “Popping off” and “getting them told” reveals immaturity (Horn blower at stop sign)
      4. Murmuring (constant gripping) often reveals discontent and ingratitude (cf. Phil. 4:11).

Conclusion:
A. May we realize the power of the tongue – for blessing or cursing – like fire can serve or destroy.
B. May we realize the need to guard and bridle the tongue (cf. Psa. 141:3)
C. May we learn when, where and how to speak to please God and bless man.

Another Sermon by Mr. Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.