

James 3

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 July 2026

Preacher: Malcolm Jarrett

[0:00] Good morning, everybody. Well, today we come to one of the most practical chapters in the whole Bible, James chapter 3. James is not interested in merely filling our heads with knowledge.

! He wants to see transformed lives. Now, someone once said the Christian life is like a cup of tea. You don't know what is inside until it gets into hot water.

James would probably add, and when it gets into hot water, listen carefully to what comes out of your mouth. Because James 3 is all about our words and our wisdom.

In answer to two important questions, what does your speech reveal about your heart? And secondly, what kind of wisdom is directing your life?

James moves from the tongue, verses 1 to 12, to wisdom, verses 13 to 18. Now, James has a remarkable ability to take Christianity out of the realm of theory and place it firmly into everyday life.

[1:13] In chapter 1, if you remember, he spoke about trials and temptations. And in chapter 2, he challenged us on favoritism and dead faith. Now, in chapter 3, he turns to something every one of us has already used today.

Not our hands, not our feet, not even our wallets, but our tongues. Someone once said the tongue is only a few inches long, but it can kill a man six feet tall.

Another comment was a sharp tongue cuts its own throat. James understood both these truths.

Now, if James were writing a modern church health check, he might not begin by asking, how large is your congregation?

How much Bible knowledge do you possess? Or how many ministries do you support? Instead, he might ask, how do you speak to your spouse?

How do you speak about people who annoy you? What do you say when nobody important is listening? Because our speech reveals our hearts. Jesus said in Luke 6.45, For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

[2:24] Now, James 3 divides naturally into two parts. As we've said, verses 1 to 12 is the tongue, and wisdom verses 13 to 18. Our word reveals the wisdom we are living by.

So, let's turn to chapter 3, if you haven't already done so. And we'll read just the first 12 verses.

Chapter 3.

Do not become teachers in large numbers, my brothers, since you know that we who are teachers will incur a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many ways.

If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is perfect, able to reign in the whole body as well.

Now, if we put the bits into the horses' mouths, so that they will obey us, we direct their whole body. Look at the ships, too. Though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, more by power these days, they are nevertheless directed by a very small rudder, wherever the incarnation of the pilot determines.

[3:28] So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how a great forest is set aflame by such a small fire, and the tongue is afire, the very world of unrighteousness.

The tongue is set amongst our body parts as that which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. For every species of beasts and birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by the human race.

But no one among mankind 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 have been made in the likeness of God.

From the same mouth come both blessings and cursings. My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way. Does a spring send out from the same opening, both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, bear olives? Or a vine bear figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh water. Okay, so, number one, the responsibility of teachers.

[4:43] Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, verse one, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. Once again, James starts off with a bang.

Why start with teachers? Well, because teachers use words. Words shape minds, and words influence lives. Words direct people towards the truth, or to error.

People admire rabbis. Remember the young man who approached Jesus and said, Rabbi, what must I do to be saved? He showed respect, and he also recognized Jesus' authority as a teacher. People listened to them and followed them. However, many desired the position, and James says, be careful. Teaching is not about status.

Teaching is about responsibility. A teacher can influence dozens, hundreds, perhaps even thousands, and God takes that seriously. Give you an illustration. Imagine, and many of you probably have done so, boarding a plane.

[5:50] The pilot comes over the intercom and says, ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. Welcome aboard. I should mention, that I have never actually flown a plane before.

However, I have watched a few YouTube videos, and I feel reasonably confident. Most of us, I would think, would be clambering for the emergency exit, and heading straight back to the terminal. Why? Because we expect competence, and experience, from a trained pilot. When someone is piloting our lives, we want them to keep us safe, and to guide us in the right direction.

And how much more important, when someone is teaching, and guiding our souls. Now, this doesn't only apply to pastors. It also applies, to Sunday school teachers, to home group leaders, youth leaders, parents, grandparents.

Every believer who influences another believer, carries responsibility. The older I get, the more I understand this verse. Because when you're young, preaching seems quite exciting.

[7:03] As the years pass, you realize that privilege, comes with accountability. The second part, of this verse, is a warning. Because you know that, we who teach, will be judged more strictly.

James is not discouraging teaching. Scripture, consistently teaches, that teachers are God's gift to the church. Rather, he warns against taking the role, lightly.

Teachers exercise, influence, their words shape, what people believe about God, his character, his gospel, how they live. A faithful teacher, can strengthen a church, but a careless, or false teacher, can lead many people, into error.

The stricter judgment, is therefore, a greater accountability, before God. Teachers are not judged, by a different standard, of salvation, but by a higher standard, of stewardship.

God entrusts them, with his word, and he will ask, how faithfully, they have handled it. The principle, runs throughout scripture. Luke 12, 48 says, from everyone, who has been given much, much will be demanded.

[8:14] Hebrews 13, 17, reminds church leaders, that they must, give an account. And 2 Timothy 2, 15, urges teachers, to correctly handle, the word of truth.

James therefore, begins the chapter, by reminding, anyone who teaches, that the tongue, is not merely, a tool of communication, it is an instrument, for which God, will hold us accountable.

Before he addresses, the power of everyone's speech, he first reminds teachers, that their words, carry an even greater responsibility, because they influence, the lives, and eternal understanding, of others.

The useful application, might be, the privilege of teaching, God's word, is never a platform, for personal recognition. It is a sacred trust.

The greater the influence, God gives us, the greater the responsibility, we bear before him. So every sermon, should drive us to prayer. Every Bible study, should drive us to prayer, and to humility, because God's truth matters.

[9:18] Number two, by the entitled, We All Stumble. We all stumble, in many ways. James is being, wonderfully realistic. He says, Christianity is not a religion, for people, who have it all together.

It is a faith, for sinners, saved by grace. Think about, some of God's, greatest servants. Abraham, he lied, about Sarah. Moses was a murderer, and also, if you remember, he lost his temper, and

struck the rock.

David committed, a murder, and adultery. Elijah ran away, in fear. Peter denied, Christ. Yet God used, every single one of them.

That does not, excuse sin, but it reminds us, that spiritual maturity, is not sinless perfection. It is a growing, dependence, upon God's grace.

One Puritan writer, said, the holiest men, are not those, most aware of their strengths, but those, most aware, of their need. James would agree. Notice the word, we.

[10 : 20] James includes himself, and I would include myself. I'm sure, Ray and Joe would as well. So that's encouraging. James, was a respected, church leader, and yet he says, we all stumble.

Not occasionally, not rarely, but we all stumble. Every Christian, battles weakness. Every Christian, battles sin. Every Christian, needs grace. The Christian life, is not pretending, we are perfect.

It is about, admitting, we are not, and continually, we need to rely, upon Christ. James then says, still in verse 2, anyone who is never, at fault in what they say, is perfect.

The word perfect, means mature, spiritually complete. James teaches, that one of the clearest, signs of maturity, is speech. Why? Because, speech reveals, what is inside.

Have you ever noticed, how spiritual, we can seem to be, on a Sunday morning? We smile, we shake hands, and we say, God bless you brother, or, God bless you sister.

[11 : 24] And when the service is finished, we go down to the car park, and then somebody, somebody cuts in front of us, in the church car park. Suddenly, our sanctification, is put to a stress test. Pressure reveals, what is really inside.

A tea bag, reveals its contents, when placed in hot water. Christians, reveal their contents, when placed under pressure. So, James gives us, a few examples. The bit in the horse's mouth.

James gives, his first illustration. When we put bits, into the mouths of horses, to make them obey us, we can actually, turn the whole animal. A horse, may weigh half a ton, but it possesses, incredible strength.

Yet a tiny bit, directs the entire animal. The bit is small. Its influence is enormous. David understood, the struggle. In Psalm 39, he wrote, I will guard my ways, that I may not sin, with my tongue.

I will guard my mouth, with a muzzle. Think about that. David was a giant killer, a warrior, a king.

Yet one of his greatest battles, was his own mouth.

[12 : 29] The same was true then, and the same is true now. We may conquer many things, and yet struggle, but to control our words. The tongue is often, the last rebel to surrender.

James says, the tongue is exactly like that. It's small, yet it controls so much. Words direct our lives. Think about some of the greatest moments, in history.

A speech by a leader, a declaration of war, a peace treaty, and a wedding vow. A gospel sermon.

Words changed everything. Likewise, a single conversation, can alter the course of life.

Perhaps someone encouraged you, when you were discouraged. Perhaps someone shared Christ with you. Perhaps someone believed in you, when nobody else did. A few words, changed your direction.

And that is the power, James is describing. He then moves on, to the rudder on a ship. So he moves from horses to ships. Although they are so large, and driven by strong winds, or power, they are still steered, by a small rudder.

[13 : 34] James lived in a maritime world. Ships represented power, and commerce. Yet despite their size, they were guided, by something relatively small. Again, the lesson is pretty obvious.

Small things, can have an enormous influence. Another illustration, the large cruise ships today, carry thousands of passengers. They weigh well over, a hundred thousand tons.

Yet, all that power, must be directed. Without guidance, power becomes a danger. And likewise, intelligence, without wisdom, becomes dangerous. Knowledge, without character, becomes dangerous.

And speech, without self-control, becomes dangerous. The tongue, may be small, but it directs relationships, careers, ministries, and families.

Number five, verses five to six. James is becoming a bit stronger now. He says, the tongue is afire. Isaiah understood the seriousness, of sinful speech.

[14 : 34] In Isaiah chapter six, when he saw the holiness of God, he did not cry, woe is me, for I have unclean hands, nor woe is me, for I have unclean feet.

What he did cry was, woe is me, for I am a man, of unclean lips. Why lips? Because Isaiah understood, that our speech, often reveals, our deepest, spiritual condition.

Then one of the seraphims, touched his lips, with a coal from God's altar. Notice where cleansing began. Not with behaviour, not with circumstances, but with grace from God.

The very area, of weakness, became the area, God cleansed. And perhaps there is encouragement, for us there too. The tongue may be, our greatest struggle. I'm sure, I'm sure that's true, for most of us.

But it's not beyond, God's transforming power, for anyone. Fire can be wonderful. A fireplace, on a winter evening. Don't need one, at the moment. A campfire, amongst friends.

[15 : 39] A stove that cooks food. But uncontrolled fire, is devastating. We've seen that, quite often, when we lived in Portugal. James wants us, to understand, that words, are like that.

Just a historical illustration. Remember the great fire, of London, which began in 1666, in a bakery, in Pudding Lane. One small spark, one small flame, and yet, within days, much of the city, had been destroyed.

Thousands, were left homeless. One spark, followed by, massive destruction. James says, that words, can operate the same way. One rumour, one criticism, one careless comment, one angry outburst, and suddenly, relationships, are damaged.

Trust is broken, friendships are wounded, churches, are divided. The power of gossip. Someone wisely said, listen to this carefully, gossip is news, you have to hurry and tell, before you find out, it isn't true.

Sadly, gossip, often travels, faster than facts. A rumour, can circle a church, before truth, has put its shoes on. James warns us, because words spread, and once spoken, they are difficult, to retrieve.

[16 : 56] An interesting illustration, a man, spread false stories, about a neighbour. Later, he felt guilty. He asked a wise pastor, what he should do.

The pastor, handed him, a feather pillow, cut it open, and scatter the feathers, he said. The man did, as the pastor suggested. And then the pastor said, now collect them all.

The feathers? Impossible, the man said. The pastor replied, so it is, with your words. Number six, the untamed tongue, James 3, 7 to 8.

James says, no human being, can tame the tongue. That sounds discouraging. James points out, humanity's achievements. For example, people tame animals, they train dogs, control horses, handle powerful scent creatures.

Yet, controlling the tongue, remains one of our greatest struggles. Why? Because the problem, is deeper than the tongue. The tongue is not the disease, it is the symptom.

[17 : 56] The heart is the issue. Jesus taught exactly that, when he said, for the mouth speaks, what the heart is full of. Jeremiah 17, 9 says, the heart is deceitful, above all things.

The tongue simply reveals, what exists inside. As an application, we often say, I didn't mean it, yet often the truth is, I did mean it, I just wish I hadn't said it.

James is driving us, towards dependence on God. Self-improvement is not enough. We need a heart transformation. Lastly, on number seven, blessing God, and cursing people.

James 3, 9 to 12. James now identifies, a shocking contradiction here. With the tongue, we praise our Lord and Father, and with it, we curse human beings.

Imagine singing, how great thou art, and then spending lunchtime, criticizing everyone in sight. James says, something is wrong. He gives examples from nature.

[19 : 01] Spring cannot produce fresh water, and salt water. A fig tree cannot produce olives. A grapevine cannot produce figs. The fruit reveals the source.

The speech reveals the heart. So a searching question for us. How do we speak? How do we speak at home? How do we speak on the telephone? Important one.

How do we speak in traffic? What about online? Those environments often reveal our true condition more than Sunday worship. A person once said, if you want to know how holy someone is, listen to them when things go wrong.

James would agree. So now we're going to transition to wisdom. James moves from speech to wisdom, and at first glance, they seem unrelated, but they are deeply connected.

The tongue reveals the wisdom controlling our lives. Two people can face the same situation and respond completely different. Why? Different wisdom, different priorities, different hearts.

[20:04] We need to remember that sometimes people don't actually hear the same words. the same way. A guy we knew called Edrich illustrated the difference between how people hear and understand things by talking about pink and blue glasses.

The point wasn't that one person is right and the other wrong, just that they're different. An example I love to use is a wife says, I've got nothing to wear.

What she often means is, nothing I own is right for this occasion. I think I need to go shopping. The husband says, I've got nothing to wear. What he means, everything I own is in the laundry basket. Same words, completely different meaning. We all wear different glasses. Some are pink, some are blue, others are tinted by our personality, by our upbringing, past hurts, or today's circumstances. James reminds us that words don't land on empty ground. They land on the hearts and minds that interpret them through their own experiences. And that's why wise speech isn't just about saying the right words.

[21:13] It's about speaking with love, humility, and understanding, recognizing that what people hear may not be what we intended to say. The tongue is small, but its influence is enormous.

Not just because of what we say, but because of what others hear. So let's turn, if you've got your Bibles open still, to the rest of James 3 from verse 13.

It says, Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds and the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and evil things.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy, and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

[22:28] Okay, so we go from the second part now. James 3, 13, we read, Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

James is now moving from speech to wisdom and as I said, at first glance this seems like a completely different subject, but it isn't. Our words reveal our hearts and our hearts reveal the wisdom that is guiding our lives.

James asks a simple question, Who is wise? Notice he does not ask who is educated, who has read the most books, or who has the highest IQ, or who can win the most arguments.

Biblical wisdom is very different from worldly wisdom. Throughout the Old Testament, wisdom is never simply knowledge. A person, I think we said this last week, can know many facts and still be a fool.

Proverbs tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is seeing life from God's perspective and living accordingly. It is truth applied, truth lived out, truth influencing daily decisions.

[23:43] James says genuine wisdom is visible. You can see it, you can observe it, you can recognize it in everyday life. A wise person does not need to tell everybody how wise they are.

People who constantly tell you how clever they are usually aren't. Truly wise people tend to display humility rather than self-promotion. James says wisdom is demonstrated by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

So humility and wisdom go hand in hand. Pride and wisdom rarely travel together. James then describes a counterfeit wisdom. Verses 14 to 16.

But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such wisdom does not come from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual or of the devil.

Notice where these things begin. In the heart. Everything comes back to the heart. And this takes us right back to Genesis. Before Adam and Eve's sin there was no lying, no gossip, no slander, no deceit.

[24:51] The first temptation into creation through the serpent when he says did God really say that? And ever since humanity has struggled with truth. Our words reveal that we live in a fallen world and possess fallen hearts.

And that is why merely trying harder never solves the problem. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit simply by trying harder. Jesus said make a tree good and its fruit will be good.

The root must be changed. The heart must be changed. And the Bible calls this a new birth. Regeneration. Becoming a new creation in Christ. The Christian life is not behaviour modification. It is a transformation from the inside out. Bitter envy says I want what someone else has. Selfish ambition says I want it my way.

One says I wish I had their blessings. The other says I must have my own way. Together they have caused untold damage throughout history. Think about the first sin.

[25 : 55] Satan envied God's position. Think about Cain. He envied Abel. Think about Joseph's brothers. They envied Joseph. Think about Absalom. He coveted his father's throne.

Envy has left a trail of destruction throughout scripture. And selfish ambition is never far behind. James says this wisdom is earthly unspiritual demonic.

And those are strong words. Why? Because this kind of wisdom reflects a world that has turned away from God. It says promote yourself, protect yourself, advance yourself, put yourself first. And the world applauds. Do we see that in our world today? Absolutely. Yet James says this mindset produces disorder and every evil practice.

One of the clearest examples of earthly wisdom is found in Genesis 11. The builders of Babel. They said let us make a name for ourselves. Notice the focus.

[26 : 54] Not let us glorify God, let us glorify ourselves, let us make a name for ourselves. This earthly wisdom in a single sentence. Self-promotion, self-exaltation, self-glory.

And unfortunately the spirit of Babel still exists. Jesus said whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Many arguments begin there. Many families disputes begin there. Many church conflicts begin there. The national conflicts begin there. Everybody wants their own way.

Everybody wants the last word. Everybody wants to win. Someone once said pride is the only disease that makes everyone sick except the person who has it.

I'll say it again. Pride is the only disease that makes everyone sick except the person who has it. James would probably have smiled at that as we have.

[27 : 53] Where envy and selfish ambition reign, peace disappears. Let's go on to heavenly wisdom. James paints one of the most beautiful portraits of Christian character found anywhere in scripture.

James 3 verse 17. But the wisdom that comes from heaven. Notice that phrase. Wisdom comes from heaven. The greatest illustration of this in the Old Testament is Solomon.

Do you remember when God invited Solomon to ask for anything, he could have requested wealth, long life, military success or power, but instead he asked for wisdom.

Why? Well, because he recognized his need. God delights to give wisdom to those who know they lack it. And that is exactly what James taught earlier. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. The world admires confidence. God honors dependence. It is God's gift. It flows from a relationship with him. It's not merely intelligence. It is a spiritual transformation.

[28 : 55] I'm just going to give you a few heavenly wisdom characters. First of all, it is pure. Purity comes first because everything else flows from it. A heart that desires holiness, a heart that desires to honor God, not perfection.

None of us achieve perfection this side of heaven, but there is sincerity, a genuine desire to please God. Number two, peace loving. The wise Christian is not a troublemaker.

That does not mean avoiding truth. Remember, Jesus never avoided the truth, but he always pursued reconciliation where possible. Some people leave peace wherever they go.

Others leave chaos wherever they go. The wise believer seeks peace. Number three, considerate. Some translations use the word gentle. The wise Christian does not have to win every argument.

Now there are believers who could start a disagreement in an empty room. James says wisdom looks different. Wisdom knows when to speak. Wisdom knows when to stay silent.

[29 : 55] Wisdom knows which battle matters. Number four, submissive, open to reason, teachable, approachable. One of the marks of spiritual maturity is remaining teachable.

The older we become, the easier it is to think we already know everything. I've got a daughter like that. She doesn't know everything as I tell her. I'm still learning. Yet wise believers, as James says, never stop learning, never stop listening, never stop growing.

Number five, full of mercy. Mercy is treating people better than they deserve. Thankfully, that is how God treats us. Peter denied Christ three times. Jesus restored him.

That is mercy. The prodigal son squatted everything. The father welcomed him home. That's mercy. Just as a healthy tree produces apples, a healthy Christian life produces fruit.

That fruit consists of kindness, patience, faithfulness, generosity, compassion. Wisdom is not merely something we know, it is something we display. Number seven, impartial.

[31:01] James has already addressed favoritism in chapter two. Now he returns to the principle, the wise believer does not value people according to wealth, education, influence, or social standing.

He reminds us every person bears God's image. Every person matters. And finally, sincere, without hypocrisy, without masks, without pretense, the Christian should increasingly become the same person everywhere.

The same person in church, the same person at home, the same person at work, the same person online. No double life, no performance, simply genuine Christianity.

Who's the perfect example? Jesus. As we read this list, there's one person who perfectly fulfills every description. Jesus Christ, he was and is pure, he was and is peace-loving, he was and is gentle, he was and is merciful, he was and is impartial, he was and is sincere.

And nowhere is this seen more clearly than in his words. When falsely accused, he did not retaliate. When insulted, he did not respond in kind. Before Pilate, he displayed remarkable restraint.

[32:15] Before his accusers, he often remained silent. Yet when he did speak, his words were exactly right. Truth without cruelty, grace without compromise, love without weakness, even from the cross, mocked, rejected, beaten, crucified.

What did he do? He prayed, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. The one who perfectly controlled his tongue died for the people who cannot control theirs.

The one who with his tongue cried out, it is finished. That is grace. That is mercy. That is our savior. James 3.18, called it a harvest of righteousness.

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. James finishes with a farming illustration, something his readers would immediately understand. He says, Every farmer knows a simple principle.

You reap what you sow. Plant wheat, harvest wheat. Plant barley, harvest barley. Plant thistles, don't expect roses. The same principle applies spiritually.

[33:19] Every word is a seed. Every conversation, plant something. Every interaction leaves something behind. Sow criticism, reap tension. Sow gossip, reap distrust.

Sow anger, reap conflict. Sow encouragement, reap growth. Sow kindness, reap blessing. Sow peace, reap righteousness. The question is not whether we are sowing.

We are all sowing something every day. The question is, what kind of harvest are we producing? James 3 leaves us with two searching questions. What do my words reveal?

And what wisdom is guiding my life? Because ultimately, as I've said already, the issue is not the tongue. The tongue is only the messenger. The heart is the source, and only Christ can transform the heart.

When Christ changes the heart, speech begins to change. Relationships begin to change. Families begin to change. Churches begin to change. The same tongue that once spread criticism can spread encouragement.

[34:18] The same mouth that once wounded can bring healing. The same person who once sowed conflict can become a peacemaker. That is the transforming power of the gospel. Imagine if every Christian paused for three seconds before speaking, how many arguments would disappear?

How many marriages would improve? How many churches would flourish? How many children would grow with confidence instead of criticism? James reminds us that Christian life is not measured merely by the songs we sing or the sermons we hear.

It is measured by the words we speak when nobody is watching. Our tongue is the overflow of our hearts. If our words need changing, our heart needs surrendering. The good news is that the same Lord who created the tongue can also transform it, which, when Christ rules the heart, grace fills the mouth.

Wisdom shapes our decisions and peace follows in our footsteps. As the psalmist prayed, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

As we close, we can use David's prayer as our own. Psalm 141, 3, set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips.

[35 : 31] And that is a prayer worth praying every morning. Before we answer the phone, before we look at the email, before we post online, before we enter a difficult conversation, Lord, set a guard over my mouth.

Because words can wound, words can heal, words can destroy, words can build up. It's interesting that David prayed for a guard over his mouth rather than a guard over everybody else's.

Most of us are quite good at identifying the sins of people's tongues. We know exactly who gossips, exactly who complains, exactly who speaks too much. David begins with himself, Lord guard my mouth, Lord watch my lips, Lord deal with my heart.

May God give us tongues that honour Christ and wisdom that reflects heaven. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and for the challenge and encouragement we have received from James chapter 3 today.

Lord, we confess that we often fail with our words. Too easily we speak without thinking, react without praying and use our tongues in ways that do not honour. Forgive us for careless words, harsh words, critical words and those times when what comes out of our mouth does not reflect the faith we profess with our lips.

[36 : 42] Thank you that your grace is greater than our failures. Thank you that through Jesus Christ there is forgiveness, cleansing and the power to change. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and always.

Amen.