**Week 1,** **Text:** James 3:5-10, Proverbs 18:21

**Topic:** Taming our Tongue

In the last 18 months, the world has experienced the impact and the power of words, more than the power of a global pandemic. Because of words, the world has descended into chaos, frustration, confusion, division, mistrust, anger, and many other negative emotions, and destructive and harmful responses.

Words have divided nations, and governments, and communities, and churches, and families, and friends, and have destroyed relationships. Words have caused some to lose hope, and live in fear, and complete isolation. Words have made some to act recklessly and without consideration and love and respect for others. The power of Words.

Proverbs 12 says our rash words are like being stabbed with a sword. But wise words bring healing.

We must speak life into others as well as ourselves. How can we accomplish this? What does Scripture say about the course of action that we need to take?

Here are two thoughts that I would like us to consider.

1. **The Power of Our Words:**

*James 3:5-10: “So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.*

*The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind.*

*But no human being 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 the people who have been made in the likeness of God.*

*From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these*

*things ought not to be so.”*

Our sinful nature and the enemies of God want us to use our tongues to demolish those around us, and not lift them up.

**Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me. That is one of the biggest lies in life that we learned growing up. Sticks and stones may break our bones, but harsh words from those we love will hurt and kill us.**

**We must speak life.** It hurts so much more when it comes from people that we care about most. And all of us have done this at times in our relationships. We have used our words to hurt and destroy.

Every time you speak a negative word into somebody’s life, it’s like knocking a nail into a piece of wood. And maybe you speak negative words into that person every day, or every week, or every month, or every year, for many years. Maybe only once in a while you speak a negative word. The power of our words.

Suddenly one day you realize, what I am doing is wrong. I’m sorry for what I have said, what I have tweeted, or posted online, or commented, or sms’ed. I’m sorry. That is like pulling out the nails from that piece of wood. The nails are out, but the holes remain, the damage is done.

The tongue is causing much more division in the Body of Christ than any

other weapon in Satan’s arsenal. The church is divided about this pandemic, about lockdowns and restrictions and vaccines, and end times, etc. all because of words.

The devil’s deceptive tongue ushered sin into humanity. Hitler used the tongue to flame the fire of World War II. Recently in South Africa, the tongue and words were used to incite a near revolution in Kwazulu Natal. And other places. The fires are still burning in the hearts of many.

The tongue has deceived people into believing all kinds of idolatries, perversions, sexual sins, greed, and evolution. The tongue makes us believe that all forms of sin are “normal” in modern life.

People are emotionally and mentally controlled and abused by words,

abused by the tongue. The power of our words.

1. **The Tongue Can Destroy or Edify:**

People leave marriages, families, jobs, churches and even kill themselves

because the power in someone’s words has devastated them. We can praise God with our mouths at church and then use that same mouth to destroy our family on the way home.

*The wisest man who ever lived wrote this, Proverbs 18:21: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it will eat its fruits.”*

God knows every motive behind every word that we speak, and we will reap the rewards of those motives!

In Romans, Paul reminds us that Abraham spoke life instead of death into a situation that humans would say is impossible.

*Romans 4:18-25: “Against all hope, Abraham in hope (Abraham had hope when all hope was lost!) believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”*

*Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that*

*Sarah’s womb was also dead.*

*Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised. Therefore “it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

*The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”*

There is power in your words, power in what you say – Abraham spoke life into what was perceived as dead.

*Romans 10:17: “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the*

*word of Christ.”*

*John 6:63: “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The*

*words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.”*

Speak God’s Word in your life and into those around you.

We live in a world where sarcasm, negativity, putting others down to puff up, disobedience, hatefulness in every aspect of government, discrimination because of your skin color, and corrupt business and divided society is the norm today.

Speaking life is being eaten away, its being destroyed, by the cancer of negativity and sin from the power of the tongue and the power of our words.

There is a story about a group of frogs that were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. All the other frogs gathered around the pit. When they saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead.

Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it OUT.

You see this frog was deaf, unable to hear the others plea. He thought they were encouraging him the entire time.

An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it through their circumstance. A destructive word to someone who is down can be all it takes to destroy them.

Be very careful and very mindful of what you say. Speak Life to those who cross your path.

God speaks words of life to you and me through His Word:

*John 3:16-17, For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.*