TITLE: SMALL AND DEADLY THINGS

TEXT: James 3:2-10; Mt. 12:34-37 & 15:18-20;

Ro. 8:5-6; 1st Peter 3:8-10

A minister was making a wooden trellis to support a climbing vine. As he was pounding away, he noticed that a little boy was watching him. The youngster didn't say a word, so the preacher kept on working, thinking the lad would leave. But he didn't. Pleased at the thought that his work was being admired, the pastor finally said, "Well, son, trying to pick up some pointers on carpentry?" "No," he replied. "I'm just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer."

Do you realize that the smallest things in our world can be the most destructive and deadly?

A viper, one of the smallest snakes is one of the deadliest known to man.

It's said that the average person can see a dot as small as eight-thousandths of an inch in diameter. But this is about 14,000 times larger than the smallest known virus.

Yet these microbes are the cause of at least 500 human diseases, some of which are very serious and can even be fatal. I have read that one strain was responsible for what was probably the greatest pestilence civilization has ever experienced -- the flu epidemic of 1918-19. That outbreak of flu took more lives than all the years of World War I.

A bullet smaller than the end of my finger can take a human life....

A nuclear warhead that would fit in a bushel basket can totally destroy entire cities and take hundreds of thousands, even millions of lives....

The Bible tells of another small thing that can bring great devastation...A potential weapon of mass destruction, if you will, that all of us have at our disposal....The human tongue....

**Jame 3:2 (NIV) We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

**3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.**

**4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.**

**5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

**6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

**7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,**

**8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

All of us have experienced the destructive nature of the tongue... Both from the standpoint of being hurt by someone else's tongue and by hurting others with ours.

I want you to notice what Scripture says in **James 3:2 (NIV) We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.**

If anyone is never at fault in what he says, Scripture says that he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check!

Perfect- **teleios {tel'-i-os}**

**1) brought to its end, finished**

**2) wanting nothing necessary to completeness**

**4) that which is perfect**

**4a) consummate human integrity and virtue**

**4b1) full grown, adult, of full age, mature**

If anyone is never at fault in what he says then he is a perfect man, he is one that is wanting nothing necessary to make him complete, integrity and virtue have been consummated in him, he has become of age, grown up, become mature in the faith.

We all stumble in many ways but it is the one who has gained control over their tongue, their mouth, the words that they speak, that is the one that is reaching perfection…

When we talk about being perfected in Christ it seems like most often we concentrate on things like bad habits and good works, when Scripture says that which will bring perfection in our life is learning to control our tongues.

In fact, he who has gained control over their tongue can keep their whole body in check!

In other words, if we can learn to control our tongue we can do anything…

Before we will ever be able to gain the kind of control over our tongues that God intends for us to have, I think that are some things that we need to understand about this little, in comparison the rest of our body, almost insignificant body part.

James compares the tongue to three things here..

A bit...A rudder... and a spark....

A bit is really pretty small in comparison to a horse, yet when the bit is placed in the horse’s mouth you can take control of the whole animal.

You pull to the left and the horse turns left--pull to the right and the horse turns right...pull back on the rains and the horse stops.

The same is true with the rudder of a ship. It is small, almost insignificant, in proportion to the rest of the ship, yet it is with that little rudder that the ship is directed....

Likewise the tongue is a small part of our body, but it makes great boasts

The tongue is capable of doing great things!

It can create peace or it can start wars!

It can create joy or it can create sorrow!

It can bring comfort and restoration or it can bring destruction!

James says: **Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

**The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**

I think I like this analogy of the tongue the best.

**Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**

Years ago on the news I remember seeing forest fires in California that literally destroyed thousands upon thousands of acres of timber... In one such case they traced the cause to a spark from a cigarette that had been carelessly thrown out of a car.

I have also seen words that have been carelessly thrown out of a mouth do similar damage in human relationships.

EXAMPLE: Words and bullets have a lot in common---once fired you can't get them back.

A Bullet wound may heal but the scar remains…

Wounds that we inflict by our words may heal over time, but they will always leave a scar....

(Example: 25 years ago a 2000 lb chimney came down on my left are causing a crushing double compound fracture. Four years ago I fell off a ladder and totally destroyed my right shoulder requiring a full shoulder replacement. All left scars. Scares fade but they will be there forever. A scar is a reminder of the injury.

The scars left by carelessly fired words may heal and fade over time but they will always be there…

Have you ever experienced being around someone when they just blew up and when they were all done they said something like, Boy I feel better, I just needed to get that off my chest!

And then looked around at all the wounded bodies around the room..

I have been in domestic situations where a husband or a wife are throwing out words like heavy artillery, the one starts firing and then the other one may start to fire back and when the smoke clears and you see all the causalities lying around the room...Moms, Dads, Children all emotionally wounded.....

Even though the wounds may heal over time the scars remain!

This may go contrary to current physiology but if verbally releasing your pain is going to inflect that pain on others and wound them, than keep it to yourself! Or better yet--give it to the Lord…

It is not a Scriptural principle to hurt others just so that we can feel better.

If we would only realize the impact that the words that we speak have upon others?

The Karen Carpenter Story.

Karen died unexpectedly several years ago of heart failure at age 32 brought on by years of self-abuse from the eating disorder Anorexia Nervosa.

But what brought on Karen's fatal obsession with weight control? It seems a reviewer once called her "Richard's chubby sister".

Lord, make us realize the power of our words…

Folks, the most important aspect of our Christianity is what comes out of our mouths, the words that we speak.

**Matt 12:36 (NIV) But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.**

**37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."**

It has been estimated that most people speak enough in one week to fill a large 500-page book. There are husbands here this morning that are thinking, they have never met my wife--she can fill at least two large books a week!

In the average lifetime this would amount to 3640 VOLUMES or 1,820,000 pages!

It can be a frightening thought to think that by these words we shall either be "justified" or "condemned."

James goes on....

**7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,**

**8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

**9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.**

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.**

God has placed all of His creation under the subjection of man....Man has taken control over or tamed all the wild beast of the earth.

Just go to a large zoo and you will see almost every known animal.

People have made pets of poisonous snakes, Lions, tigers, bears--we have domesticated dogs, cats, horses, camels, elephants…

Mankind has done all this yet Scripture tells us: **no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**

No man can tame it!

**1150 damazo {dam-ad'-zo}**

**1) to tame, curb, restrain**

Our tongues are describes as a restless evil, full of deadly poison!

Restless evil= **{ak-at-as'-khet-os}**

**unruly 1) that which can not be restrained**

evil= **kakos {kak-os'}**

**1) of a bad nature, not such as it ought to be**

**2a) base, wrong, wicked**

**3) troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive,**

Deadly= **thanatephoros {than-at-ay'-for-os}**

**1) death bringing, deadly**

Poison= **ios {ee-os'}**

**1) poison (of animals), poison of asps is**

**under their lips,**

**1b) spoken of men given to reviling and thereby**

**injuring others**

Our tongues are an unrestrained evil! They are full of all kinds of injurious, even deadly poison..

Makes you want to go get the Listerine!

And no man can tame it!

If we can't tame our tongue then what is the use of trying? What hope do we have?

I believe we find the answer in a passage of Scripture, where Jesus is speaking rather harshly to the Pharisees, says this:

**Matt 12:34 (NIV) You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.**

Did you catch that??

**For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.**

(What comes out here (mouth), originates in here (heart)!

**Matt 15:18 (NIV) But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man `unclean.'**

**19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.**

**20 These are what make a man `unclean';**

**But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart**!

Here we find the answer to our dilemma..

No man can tame the tongue! We can't do it! We can't tame our own tongue any more then we can secure our own salvation.

The same one who can save us from our sin is the only one who can tame our tongue because both come about the same way....

They both take place in the heart!

**For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks!**

If we speak destructive, hurtful words then it is not Jesus that is overflowing from our heart!

We are still being controlled by our sinful nature.

**Roma 8:5 (NIV) Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.**

**6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;**

We gain control over the unruly evil of our tongue as we submit ourselves to Christ and allow His Spirit control of our life…

Whenever harsh or unkind or damaging words start to come out our mouth then we can know that It is not Jesus that is overflowing from our heart, we are not being controlled by the Spirit but by our sinful nature.

**9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.**

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.**

Has this ever happen to you....

Come to Church and spend an hour praising God with your mouth and then on the way home you find some very un- holy things coming out of the same mouth that just minutes or hours earlier was praising God?

**9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.**

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.**

No man can tame the tongue--You can't tame your tongue and I can't tame mine----But Jesus can if we allow Him to!

**1Pet 3:8 (NIV) Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.**

**9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.**

**10 For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.**

Let me challenge you with this thought in closing this morning......

If all the words that you speak in any given week were to be recorded in a book, would it be a book that you would want others to read?

Would you want Jesus to read it?

Would it be a book that would help lead others to Christ?

You see, as a Christian, your life, your words may be the only Bible that some people will ever read!

This morning, is it your desire to fulfill your calling?

Is it your desire to become the perfect man or woman of God that He has called you to be?

Have you given Jesus, not just control of your life, but have you given Him control of your tongue?

Are the words that our mouths speak the overflowing of Jesus that is in our hearts?