

SERMON NOTES

Taming The Tongue

Ps Nathan Bean
Nexus Church
05 JULY 2026

James 3:1-18

opening prayer

Pray that the Lord would soften hearts to receive His truth and life today, transforming the words we speak by healing our hearts for His glory.

ice breaker

Share a time when someone's words either deeply marked you for good. How did those words shape or redirect you in that moment, and in the years of your life to follow?

overview

- Our words frame our world. The power of life and death is in the tongue (**Prov 18:21**).
- Our words reveal the condition of our hearts. From the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks (**Matt 12:34**).
- The tongue can't be tamed, but it can be healed. Only the gospel can truly transform our speech by healing the brokenness and pain carried inside.
- Starting today, you can sow differently to reap a harvest of righteousness through your speech.

go deeper

This profound sermon from Ps Nathan explores the impact our words have on our lives and relationships, drawing primarily from **James 3**. The message both challenges and reminds us that the tongue carries great influence and creative agency in how we bear the image of God. Just as the Lord spoke creation into being (**Gen 1**), our words carry weight and have the power to bring life or destruction (**Prov 18:21**), to build up or tear down.

The sermon challenges us to recognise that our speech reveals the condition of our hearts, and that lasting transformation doesn't come simply from greater discipline or from controlling our words, but from allowing the gospel to heal and transform us from the inside out.

Like Isaiah, whose lips were cleansed when he encountered God's holiness (**Isa 6**), we too can experience the renewing work of the Spirit. As we receive God's grace, we are empowered to break free from the destructive power of our harmful words and the words of others, to begin sowing words of life, hope, and blessing that shape our relationships and reflect the heart of God.

scripture memory

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

Eph 4:29 NLT

discussion

- 1** Ps Nathan: "Your tongue is trying to guard your heart and protect you." What does this mean and how does insecurity, hurt, or fear drive negative speech?

discussion cont.

- 2** Read **James 3:9-10**. As image-bearers, why is it inconsistent to praise God and curse people? What does this reveal about our hearts?
- 3** If you were to audit your speech from the past week, what would it reveal about your heart? Consider any use of expletives, negativity, comparison, boasting, and criticism, through to encouragement and life-giving words.

application

This week, commit to one or more of these practical exercises:

- For the next 24 hours, try to keep a record of all the negative or harmful words and/or statements that come out of your mouth. Journal about and reflect upon anything you notice about your heart when you want to say something negative.
- Ask a trusted relationship to lovingly point out when you're not speaking life. Commit to an unoffendable spirit when they follow you up on something.
- Speak specific encouragement to at least one person per day.
- Identify one negative thing that was spoken over or about you that still has power. Write it down, pray over it with someone, and ask the Lord to break its power. Replace that former narrative with the truth found in Scripture.

closing prayer

- Healed hearts so our words may be life-giving.
- Wisdom and self-control in our speech.
- Any specific words that need to be broken off and replaced with God's truth.

MORE RESOURCES

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Reminder: Help your group understand that prayer is about relationship, not perfection or performance. Share your own struggles with prayer to create a safe space for honesty. Follow up with group members this week to encourage them in their prayer commitments

Prayer/praise report from your group? Anything else you think we should know? [Click here](#) to pass it on to our Pastoral Team so we can address it in our weekly meeting.

additional questions

1. How does understanding yourself as fully loved and accepted in Christ change your need to defend yourself or put others down with your words?
2. James describes the tongue as “a restless evil full of deadly poison” (**Jam 3:8**) that no human can tame. What does this reveal about our need for the Lord’s transforming work in our hearts, let alone our speech?
3. Share about your experience of words bringing life to your journey, and how that has shaped who you are today.
4. What would it look like practically to audit your speech for one week and discover what is truly overflowing from your heart?
5. Isaiah’s lips were cleansed with a coal from the altar in God’s presence (**Isa 6**). How does spending time in God’s presence heal and transform the words we speak?