BE CAREFUL LITTLE TONGUE

Int.

1. Aim: To show what we must do in controlling our tongue.
2. James 1:26 "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."
3. James 3:1-12 - discusses the power of the tongue
4. "Be Careful Little Tongue" - This is one of the lines from a little children's song that we often teach our kids and sometimes sing it during Vacation Bible School.
   a. We think of it as a "kids' song" but it is far more than that!
   b. For the Father up above is looking down in love
   c. Everyone must be very careful what our tongue speaks - children and adults
5. The uncontrolled tongue is especially harmful and dangerous to the body of Christ.

Discussion

I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CONTROLLING THE TONGUE?

A. The Old Testament warns us about avoiding gossip and evil speaking.

1. "You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD." Leviticus 19:16
2. **Psalm 50:16-20**
3. Proverbs 20:19- "He who goes about as a **talebearer** reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips." -
4. A SCANDAL-MONGER = is the meaning of this word

B. The New Testament tells us to put away the wicked use of the tongue.

1. Ephesians 4:31- "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice."

2. Titus 3:1-2 "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2- to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."

II. WHY IS AN UNCONTROLLED TONGUE SO DANGEROUS?

A. Because words rashly spoken can have serious consequences.

1. Jephthah made a rash vow with an uncontrolled tongue which caused him great grief. **Judges 11:30-40**

   a. Vowed to God that if God delivered the enemy into his hands then he would offer as a burnt offering whatever met him at the door of his house.

   b. They won the battle

   c. When he returned home his daughter was the first to come out to meet him

   d. This was a very rash vow that he had made - did not think before he spoke !

2. It was because of rash speaking that King Herod ended up having John the Baptist beheaded, even though Herod did not want it done. **Mark 6:22-28**

   a. Daughter of Herodias danced before him and it pleased him very much

   b. He promised her that he would give her whatsoever she would ask.

   c. Her mother told her to ask for the head of John the Baptist - she was mad at John because she was in an unscriptural marriage and John had told them that it was not a lawful marriage.

   d. Herod made this promise to the young girl and the result was John being beheaded.

3. Words can often get us into trouble when spoken rashly.

4. An uncontrolled tongue can be dangerous .....

B. Because it will affect the lives of individuals for a lifetime.

1. James 3:6 "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell."

   a. The tongue is compared to an uncontrolled fire.

   b. You can get a big fire started and it becomes impossible to bring it under control.

2. It hurts the person you are talking about, his/her family, friends, neighbors, etc. It can affect them for a lifetime.

3. In a matter of seconds our words can crumble a reputation that took years to build. Gossip, slander and evil words can hurt and destroy others.

4. Proverbs 26:20- "Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases."

5. When words are spoken, they cannot be "unspoken". When one says the wrong thing, he may send an apology out to attempt to cover it, but the word itself can never be recalled.

C. A man who has an uncontrolled tongue brings pain and hurt upon himself.

1. The uncontrolled tongue not only hurts others, it ends up hurting ourselves even more. The inevitable result of all lying, gossiping, slandering, and cursing is death by our own poison.

2. Proverbs 21:23- "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue Keeps his soul from troubles."
3. 1 Peter 3:10- "For He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit."

D. It makes our religion useless in the sight of God.

1. James 1:26- "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless." vain, empty
2. Religion is useless or vain if we do not bridle our tongue.

III. GOSSIP AND MURMURING IS ESPECIALLY HARMFUL TO A CONGREGATION OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE!

A. The Scriptures speak of the kind of person that will gossip and speak evil among God's people.

1. Titus 1:9-11 "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain."
2. Murmuring against the church and it's work is destructive to the body and earns the displeasure of Jehovah God..
   a. Murmuring against the preacher, elders and song leaders and members is destructive.
   b. It hurts the church - hurts your influence

c. Think about the effect it has upon your children or your friends when you speak evil about the Lord's church !

3. God showed his displeasure at His people murmuring in the Old Testament.

a. Exodus 15:24 "And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?"

b. Exodus 16:2 "Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness."

c. Numbers 11:1 "Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp."

d. Numbers 14:27- "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me."

4. In the New Testament it is also strongly condemned

a. 1 Corinthians 10:10-11 "nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

b. Philippians 2:14-15 "Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,"

c. Jude 1:14-16 "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage."

IV. A GODLY TONGUE WILL BE USED IN A POSITIVE WAY

A. We can offer words of PRAISE, BLESSING, ENCOURAGEMENT to others with our tongue.

1. Prov 25:11 "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
2. Prov 10:20 "The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth."
   a. To young Christians, preachers, Bible teachers, elders, deacons, mothers, fathers, etc.
   b. You may never know (or perhaps learn years later) how much your words of praise meant to someone.
3. Prov 15:23 "A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"
4. Prov 16:24 "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones."
5. Isa 50:4 "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary..."

6. Luke 4:22 "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"
7. Col 4:6 "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

B. The tongue can be controlled and used in a proper way that does much good.

CONCLUSION:

1. "I am more deadly than the screaming shell of the cannon. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, no purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom forgive. My name is Gossip."
2. Speech - Kind tongue If someone paid you ten cents for every kind word you said about people, and collected five cents for every unkind word, would you be rich or poor? Henry N. Ferguson
3. How do you use your Tongue? Be careful little tongue !
4. "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:" - 1 Pet. 3:10

End Notes

1. Grady L. Scott -
2. See file on Tongue - Speech

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Night April 1, 2007
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