

WHITFIELD PARISH

St James' Church † St Luke's Church

LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 4 October 2009

Walk the walk – James 3.1-12

James moves on from faith and works in chapter 2, to talk about the power of the tongue, by beginning with those who teach (the Word). We become God's children through the powerful word he gave us, 'the word of truth' (1:18). According to Genesis 3:12 the first actual sin after the fall was that of speech. It's with this in mind that James highlights the use of the same tongue, which declares our faith, condemns others, and praises God.

1. Who are today's teachers, and how do they differ from that of an evangelist? See Acts 2:42, Rom.12:6-8, 1Cor. 12:28, Eph.4:11,12.
2. Because of the more widespread influence of teachers, they shall be judged more severely. This refers to the use of the tongue, but if no sin is greater than another, why is the case?
3. Verse 2 takes up the theme began in ch1:19. 'Be quick to hear, slow to speak'. It also explains verse 1.

Read v.2-5a

We have two eyes, two ears, one mouth, yet we often speak twice as much as we listen, and a fast talker has been described as a fast thinker, (or not thinking at all!), whilst a slow talker a slow thinker. Do you agree or disagree, why?

4. To control the tongue means we therefore control our thoughts, our inner word, it shapes our personality. How does this reflect our perpetuity to sin; to each other, to God?

Read v 5b-12

5. Right speech is the pre-eminent sign of Christian character. How does the use of inappropriate language (swearing, lies, gossip, innuendo, impurity etc.) reveal our true selves to others? Is it ever right to lie (sometimes referred to as 'white' lies)? Discuss.
6. What some find offensive others ignore. Make a list of words you can think of who's meaning has changed, perhaps even within your own lifetime. 'Wicked' is a good example.
7. How do we distinguish between a word and its intended meaning? What if anything, do you do to challenge or correct individuals? How do they react?
8. Those who may have attended any sort of listening course will know that if we allow others to speak, we learn and understand more of who they are, and place them before ourselves. Perhaps this coming week you might take up the challenge to listen twice as much as you speak, and when you do, say at least something that is positive and encouraging to the listener. You might like to begin next week's session sharing your experiences?

Jesus said 'Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.' Mt.12:34b. Close by asking the Lord to help you with the challenge, and praising His name.