



## WEEK 4 - SUNDAY 13 JULY

### Welcome to the study of the Book of James

It is suggested by scholars that this letter (Epistle) was written by James who is thought to be the brother of Jesus. According to John 7:3-5 James was not a believer. He only became a true follower after the Resurrection. According to the Galatians he headed up the Jerusalem Church. The Book of James outlines the faith walk through *genuine religion* (1:1-27), *genuine faith* (2:1-3:12) and *genuine wisdom* (3:13-5:20). We will even pick up in our readings the discourse on faith in action..... hence our theme ..... LIVING AS A CHRIST FOLLOWER. It is about “Walking the Talk.”

**Week 1.** Trails and Temptations – 22 June.

**Week 2.** Listening and doing – 29 June.

**Week 3.** Faith and works – 6 July.

**Week 4. Taming the Tongue – 13 July**

**Week 5.** Two types of Wisdom – 20 July.

**Week 6.** Worldliness and Riches – 27 July.

## TAMING THE TONGUE

*“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me”... Not true... Our words can make or break others. What we say has potential. How we decide to use the tongue should be of Godly value.*

**Worship Song:** Gratitude - Brandon Lake - <https://youtu.be/dQdfs5S6jyA?si=sSsmYH5xj-1x1EPy>

**Reading:** Psalm 39:1-5 / James 3:1-12 / Matthew 16:13-17

### Psalm 39:1-5

*<sup>1</sup> I said, ‘I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth while in the presence of the wicked.’ <sup>2</sup> So I remained utterly silent, not even saying anything good. But my anguish increased; <sup>3</sup> my heart grew hot within me. While I meditated, the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue: <sup>4</sup> ‘Show me, Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. <sup>5</sup> You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure.*

### James 3:1-12

*Taming the tongue*

***3** Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. <sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

### **Matthew 16:13-17**

*Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah*

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' <sup>14</sup> They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' <sup>15</sup> 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.'

## **REFLECTION ON THE READINGS: SABELO NTANJANA – LOCAL PREACHER**

The theme of "taming the tongue" resonates deeply in James 3:1-12 and finds a complementary perspective in Matthew 16:13-17. These passages challenge us to reflect on the power of our words and the source of our confessions, urging us to align our speech with God's truth and wisdom.

The passage in James 3 calls for intentionally taming the tongue, a task James suggests is nearly impossible without divine help (James 3:8). As believers, we are urged to seek God's wisdom to purify our hearts, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Taming the tongue begins with a transformed heart, rooted in humility and dependence on God. Matthew 16 complements James by showing the positive potential of the tongue when it is surrendered to God.

Peter's confession becomes the foundation for the Church (Matthew 16:18), illustrating how Spirit-led words can have eternal impact. It invites us to consider how our speech can testify to God's truth and identity in our daily interactions.

Together, these passages call us to a higher standard of speech (or not speaking). James reminds us of the tongue's destructive potential and the need for vigilance, while Matthew highlights its capacity to proclaim truth when guided by God.

Taming the tongue requires us to:

- **Examine Our Hearts:** Our words reflect our inner state. Are we cultivating hearts filled with love, humility, and faith, or are we allowing bitterness, pride, or anger to shape our speech?
- **Seek God's Wisdom:** Like Peter, we need divine revelation to speak truth. Prayer and immersion in Scripture align our words with God's will.
- **Practice Intentionality:** We must pause before speaking, asking whether our words build up or tear down, bless or curse.
- **Confess Christ:** Our speech should reflect our identity as followers of Jesus, pointing others to Him through words of grace, truth, and love.

**Application:** Reflect on a recent conversation where your words had a significant impact positive or negative. How did they reflect your heart at that moment? Consider praying for God's help to tame your tongue, asking for wisdom to speak words that honour Him and bless others. Like Peter, seek moments to boldly confess Christ's identity through your words, whether in sharing your faith or encouraging someone in love. May our tongues be instruments of God's grace, proclaiming His truth and reflecting His love in all we say, in Jesus' name Amen.

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How have my words recently reflected the state of my heart, and what changes might I need to make to align my speech with God's love and truth?
2. In what situations do I struggle most to control my tongue, and how can I seek God's wisdom to respond with grace in those moments?
3. How can I use my words to boldly confess Christ's identity, like Peter, in my daily interactions with others?
4. What practical steps can I take to pause and evaluate my words before speaking, ensuring they build up rather than tear down?

## DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

<b>Monday</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b> - Matthew 16:13 <i>"When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'"</i> <b>PRAYER:</b> Heavenly Father, You revealed to Peter the truth of Jesus' identity as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Grant me a heart open to Your Spirit, that I may boldly confess Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Guide my words to reflect Your truth and love, glorifying You in all I say. In Jesus' name, Amen.
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b> - Matthew 16:14 <i>They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'</i> <b>PRAYER:</b> Gracious God, in a world filled with many voices and opinions about who Jesus is, help me to discern and proclaim Your truth. Clear my mind of confusion and guide my words to reflect the identity of Your Son, Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord. In His holy name, Amen.
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b> - Matthew 16:15 <i>"'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'"</i> <b>PRAYER:</b> Lord Jesus, You ask me, "Who do you say I am?" Fill my heart with Your Spirit, that I may boldly declare You as the Christ, the Son of the living God. May my words and life confess Your truth and bring glory to Your name. Amen.
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b> - Matthew 16:16 <i>"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'"</i> <b>PRAYER:</b> Heavenly Father, Like Peter, I proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Fill me with Your Spirit to boldly confess this truth in my words and actions. May my life reflect Your Son's love and glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.
<b>Friday</b>	<b>MEMORY VERSE</b> - Matthew 16:17 <i>"Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.'"</i> <b>PRAYER:</b> Father in Heaven, You revealed to Peter the truth of Jesus' identity as Your Son. Open my eyes and heart to Your divine revelation, that I may know and proclaim Christ with boldness and faith. Bless me with Your wisdom to speak Your truth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## FOR THE KIDS:

**Written by** Magogodi Nkuna

### **Week 4 - What Do You Want?**

**Scripture:** *"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit."* — Proverbs 18:21 (ESV)

### **Explanation**

What if I told you that you could shape your future with your words? That the things you speak—about yourself, about others and about your circumstances—are not just sounds, but seeds?

Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that *“death and life are in the power of the tongue.”* Our words carry weight. They can build up or tear down, heal or harm, bless or curse. And the fruit of those words? We’ll eat it. We’ll live in it.

So, what are you speaking over your life today? Are you declaring hope, purpose, and truth? Or are you unknowingly sowing fear, doubt, and discouragement?

This verse challenges us to become intentional with our speech—not just in what we say to others, but in what we say to ourselves. Because every word is a choice: to give life or to take it.

### **Reflection Questions**

- What words have I been speaking over myself lately?
- Do my words reflect faith or fear?
- How can I use my voice today to bring life to someone else?

### **Prayer**

Lord, help me to be mindful of the words I speak. Teach me to speak life—to myself, to others, and into every situation I face. Let my tongue be an instrument of healing, encouragement, and truth. May I reflect Your heart in every conversation. Amen.