

Communio Sanctorum: Blessed Speech

SERMON NOTES AND STUDY QUESTIONS –FEBRUARY 9, 2020 – JAMES 3:5-12

Sermon Notes

1. **According to Scripture, _____ have creative and destructive power.**
 - John 1:1 – *In the beginning was the Word...all things were made through him.*
 - Genesis 2:19 – *the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them*
2. **Blessing and _____: power-laden words that give identity, vocation, and meaning.**
 - Gen 1:27-28 – *He created humankind in his own image...He blessed them...be fruitful and have dominion.*
 - Gen 3:17 – *Cursed in the ground because of you.*
3. **Our Cursed speaking is an expression of our cursed heart.**
 - James 3:6, 9-10 – *And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell...With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.*
4. **The Gospel Blessing - Jesus Christ took on himself our curse, and gave us his _____.**
 - Gal 3:13-14 – *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us*
 - Mt 5:3, 6 – *“Blessed are the poor in Spirit...Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...”*
5. **The Gospel Blessing frees our tongues to speak only to _____ up.**
 - Eph 4:29 – *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*
 - i. We talk to one another rather than talking about one another.
 - ii. We refuse to listen to negative talk about one another, but we redirect people to speak to one another with whom they have complaint.
 - iii. We look for things to praise, not underestimating the power of kindness.
 - iv. We put the best construction on someone else’s actions possible.
6. **The Gospel Blessing frees our tongues to be _____ to speak.**
 - James 1:19 – *let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak,*
 - i. Do not jump to conclusions, but listen to understand.
 - ii. Do not interrupt or cut off.
 - iii. Listen for and acknowledge areas of agreement.
 - iv. Listen for and acknowledge the ways we are wrong.
 - v. We don’t need to defend ourselves against other’s curses (1 Peter 3:9).
7. **The Gospel Blessing frees our tongues to speak _____ truth.**
 - Eph 4:25 – *therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*
 - i. We bring our concerns to one another face to face, in humility and gentleness.
 - ii. We don’t shove things under the rug or abandon the relationship, but trust Christ to carry us through difficulties.

THERE IS NOTHING ABOUT A MAN OR IN A MAN THAT CAN DO GREATER GOOD OR GREATER HARM, IN SPIRITUAL OR IN TEMPORAL MATTERS, THAN THIS SMALLEST AND WEAKEST OF HIS MEMBERS, THE TONGUE.

– LUTHER, THE LARGE CATECHISM, EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Life Group Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Speaking to others about our hurts, hopes, and thoughts can be intimidating. Why is speaking honestly to others difficult?
2. What aspects of blessed speech (#5,6,7 above) do you find most difficult? Why?

Into the Word

1. Review the proverbs in Sunday's bulletin. How do they express the power of words?
2. Read Matthew 12:33-37. Why are words the clearest indication of the state of one's heart?
3. The sermon makes a distinction between Cursed Speech and Blessed speech. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. What are some examples of each?
 - a. Why is Cursed Speech a force of death? Why is it so difficult to avoid?
 - b. Why is blessed speech a source of life? Where does it come from?
4. Read 1 Peter 3:8-17. Why exactly is being slow to speak a result of faith in Jesus blessing?
5. Read Ephesians 4:25-27. How exactly does the gospel free us to address, rather than ignore, difficult things in our community?

Application

1. Think of someone in your family, workplace, or congregation, who needs your Blessed Speech. Pray and plan for how you might approach this person with words of blessing.
2. How does the Gospel Blessing free you to speak the truth about your own needs to other believers? What ways might the church care for you if it knew you were in need?
3. When is speaking the truth to an outside authority is the loving and right thing to do?