

Sunday 12th September 2021

Trinity 15



Our first reading today is from the Letter of James and teaches us some very important lessons about the power of words.

James 3: 1-12:

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

The picture above shows a forest fire. We continue to see many such fires raging in different parts of the world, where trees and grass or heathland are tinder dry and temperatures very hot. How do these fires start? Often with just a tiny spark – it doesn't take much to make a huge blaze, which threatens wildlife and people's homes and lives.

In today's reading, James talks about part of our very being that is the same. We have the potential to do some incredible or horrible things, and do you know what we use to do them? Our tongues!

Our words are powerful, and we need to use them wisely for telling the truth and lifting others up, rather than bringing them down. Sadly, we don't always stop to think before we speak, or consider

how our words will impact others. James's words remind us that the things we say can either be a helpful tool or a harmful weapon. Words have lasting effects for good or for bad.

The way information mutates can cause rampant gossip and ill feelings to run wild around us, just like a blazing fire. Once we speak something, we can't just take it back. We must think BEFORE we speak, asking ourselves and God if what we are about to say is holy, truthful, positive and uplifting.

James is saying that we can't act as if we love and worship God, but turn around and badmouth people. We need to make sure our mouths are clean - meaning good things come out of them.

Let's pray this week that we will use our mouths to glorify God and to encourage those around us and never to hurt others.

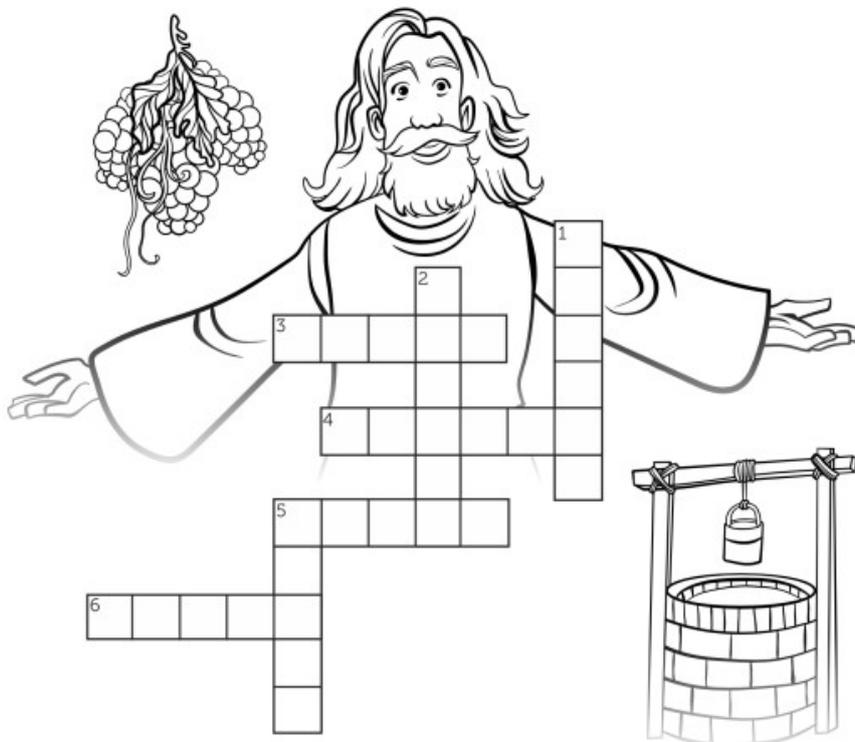
A prayer for this week: Father God, we thank you for loving us and for forgiving our thoughtless words. Give us wisdom in speech, to use kind and positive words to encourage one another. Amen.

🤔 Perhaps you could write your own prayer?

You may need to re-read the passage from James's letter to complete this puzzle!

THE POWER OF WORDS

James 3:1-12



Across

- A tiny ____ can start a forest fire.
- A bit and ____ helps us to control the direction in which horses move.
- James warned that we should not be ____ to teach God's word.
- We should use our words to ____ God and reflect a godly life.

Down

- A ____ and a person can steer a sailing ship.
- We use our tongues to ____ God and then curse people He made in His own image.
- The only thing on ____ humans have not tamed is their own tongues.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Taming the Tongue

Z Q Y K I N D K H Y S M H S F N J W X R T B T W
P W F B Y X Q Q V Q B T F P W O R D S E T W S T
C C V C S W P D I U R U C D G Z V B D L B R D R
J E H Z L K Z R A D M S V J T A H O R K W S F V
F K I O B Q H L Z W J G A M J Z B D N I R A G X
X F C L R N N H D U O U E W M E H Y B H X M R L
H R O C K S Q S P L S R K F S M C Z F G V M A G
V N M W U D W P X M K E O S P E A K L I P L A S
M R H V D E X G G P R D L F V A J Y O L H N U H
J R B M G L N F U U D E K Z W R J G V N V Z Z Y
I Y F B D J K P Q L V E I K C W Z U I Y V V B L
W X N V X G T K C V T M U R O G T J N T S F S Y
C L M U I J O L Y M G E U D G G Z E G O X L Z O
C M L T T L N P V O F R J Q L O X K J G V J R X
A F N S E C G O B U I V L D X O I Y Q F M M M Y
R M W J J I U W T T H A H Y U D E E G C X C F F
E G F V N F E E V H D Y B V R P T H O U G H T S
F P F G U L B R K E X X S O E V Z K Q E Z K E U
U R N U G J S L Y U Y H E C G V N S P C U I I D
L M G G P B O H B L K K B R L D H T O D P F W J
O F X O N D S Z P H E A R T X C N O V H T F P E
J I J D V N R S L I K V X W P U X R F R R C C S
G A A L G U A R D H E E X S D I U S O B H R Z U
U T T Y O R N Z Z M I E O R O O R J O D X M K S

loving	godly	Jesus	redeemer
rock	thoughts	words	careful
good	kind	speak	body
power	guard	heart	mouth
tongue			

A page to colour:

