

Week 7 - Taming the Tongue

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read in the letter of James.
- James, chapter 3. I'd like us just to walk through the whole chapter, but we'll just take as our text the words of verses 1 and 2. James 3 at the beginning.
- Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness, for we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.
- I don't know about you, but when I was young, and when I spoke back to my parents, when I shouldn't have, or I said something I shouldn't have, in order to tame my tongue, I would always be issued with a warning, say that again, and I'll wash your mouth out with soap and water.
- Now, I'm sure that during your childhood you received a warning like that, or maybe one to that effect. But now that we're a little older and we're a little wiser, we've come to realise that it's not soap and water that we need to cleanse our mouths, but the blood of Jesus Christ.
- [1 : 2 8] And it's not the threat of our parents or the fear of having a soapy mouth that will deter us from misusing our tongue, but a heart that loves Jesus and desires to live in submission to his word.
- And as we said before, that's what the letter of James, it's all about. That's what it's all about. It's a handbook to Christian living. It's a handbook for those who love Jesus and desire to live in submission to his word.
- Because Christianity and being a Christian, it's not just about believing certain doctrines and following certain traditions. It's about taking up your cross and following Jesus.
- It's about having our lives transformed by the power of the gospel and being able to apply that gospel in our lives and living out the gospel in a practical way.
- And as we've seen throughout the letter of James, James' greatest concern, it's not about information, but it's about application. And as he has already stressed to us again and again, that if we're not willing to listen and to respond to the teaching of God's word, then we're never going to apply that teaching in our lives.
- [2 : 4 2] But you know, it's interesting that the subject of taming the tongue is brought up again in this letter of James, because James, he's already told us in the opening chapter, he said to us in chapter one that we need to be doers of the word and not only hearers.
- And James stressed to us that we need to be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, because wrath and anger doesn't produce in us the righteousness of God. And James said that we need to listen more and we need to speak less.
- And to make his point clear, James said at the very end of chapter one, he said that if anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his own heart and his religion is useless.

And what James said in chapter one and what James is saying here in chapter three, is that our tongue and the use of our tongue, it defines our Christianity. It defines the kind of Christian we really are.

And so you can see why James brings up this subject again, the subject of taming the tongue, because he says that we need to be in control of our tongue. We need to be in control of our tongue.

[3 : 57] And you know, thinking about, well, this evening's sermon, I suppose that sometimes we can think that certain sermons or certain passages, they apply to certain people.

Or we can think that certain application on what is said, it refers to we have a particular person in mind, oh, that's good for them. But you know, thinking about this passage, and I suppose what we're going to look at this evening, it applies to all of us.

And it addresses all of us. And it addresses all of us because we all have a tongue. And I don't think any of us would deny that we misuse the tongue we have been given. And so what advice does James give to us in order to tame our tongue?

And I'd like us to see that James speaks about four things in this passage in relation to our tongue. He speaks about stumbling, steering, subduing, and sowing.

Stumbling, steering, subduing, and sowing. So we look first of all about stumbling. James speaks about stumbling. Look at verses one and two again with me.

[5 : 07] He says, Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers. For you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, He is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

You know, what we ought to notice from these opening verses is that instead of James beginning by talking about the destructive nature of our tongue, he begins by discouraging his readers from becoming teachers.

And what James means by a teacher is a preacher or a teaching elder. One who is set apart and he's educated to teach others.

And so James, he's discouraging these young Christians, and in particular the men, he's discouraging them from going in for the ministry. Paul, of course, said to young Timothy that if anyone desires the office of a teacher, he desires a good thing.

But Paul never minimised the importance or the responsibility of teaching sound doctrine. Because as you know in Paul's second letter, in the same vein, Paul reminded Timothy that his responsibility as a teacher of God's word and his responsibility, Timothy's responsibility to God's people was to preach the word.

[6 : 32] He said, preach the word and be ready with it in season and out of season. And you're to reprove people, rebuke people, exhort people with all patience and teaching.

And so the reason both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle James, the reason they would have discouraged anyone from entering the ministry is because, as James says, they will be judged more strictly.

But in the early church, and maybe you could say even today, many of the young Christians, they were entering the ministry not because they were called to it, but because they loved the prestige, they loved the power, and they loved the position that was given to a teacher of God's word.

These young Christians, they loved the status, and they loved possessing the intellect and the knowledge that would have given them this advantage over others.

Because if you were educated and if you had knowledge, you were esteemed, highly esteemed, and you were revered by people. And inevitably, James's greatest fear was that these leaders would become arrogant and self-righteous and egotistic.

[7 : 44] But notice the humility of James when he issues this warning because he includes himself in it. He says in verse 1, Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

There's so much compassion and affection because James says, we, and he refers to them as my brothers. And he gives to them this gentle but firm warning.

He says, Do not go into the ministry unless you're called because ministers will be judged on every word. And James doesn't mean that their sermons will be judged and critiqued by their congregations.

That's inevitable. There's no point worrying about that. But what James means is that every preacher will be held accountable to God for every word in every sermon that they preach.

And that's because when it comes to preaching and teaching, the preacher's and teacher's business is with words. Their work is with words.

[8 : 54] And the muscle that the preacher exercises most is his tongue. And as James tells us, the tongue, it's the most difficult part of the body to control. Therefore, it's easy to lead others astray.

It's very easy to use the tongue to flatter people and tell them that everything is going to be okay. It's easy to tell people what they want to hear. But it's not so easy to tell people what they need to hear.

It's easy to teach heresy and lead people astray and overlook the truth. It's even easy to lead people to hell. And the easiest way to lead people to hell from a pulpit is to just fill their minds with other things.

Fill their minds with jokes or stories or illustrations or distractions. Basically, anything that keeps them from the truth. But James reminds the preacher that failing to teach and tell people the truth, it's not an option.

because we are accountable before God for our presentation and our deliverance of God's holy word. And I suppose if you'll allow me to make this more personal to myself, I know that every word that I preach, both on the Lord's Day and on a Wednesday evening, it will be judged by God.

[10 : 16] And it reminds me that I have the responsibility to spend time studying God's word. It reminds me that I have to spend time preparing sermons.

I can't just go into the pulpit on a whim that everything that comes out of my mouth will be the truth. I have to be prepared. And I have to preach the whole counsel of God.

I can't just preach on my hobby horses or topics that I like. And I can't avoid the things that people don't want to hear or things that might cause people offence.

I can't just pick and choose what to preach on. I must preach the truth of God's word because as his servant, I am accountable to God for it. And I'm accountable to God for this congregation.

I vowed myself to this congregation. And so I don't want anyone to stand up before me from this congregation to stand up on the Day of Judgment and say to me that I didn't tell them the truth.

[11 : 17] Of course, as James says, there's no perfect preacher. He says that in verse 2. We all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.

And again, James, he includes himself in this. And he says, we all stumble. None of us are perfect. And because no preacher is perfect, no preacher should ever be put on a pedestal.

No preacher should be venerated or exalted or idolized. No preacher should be followed. Yes, they may be enjoyed for want of a better word, but no preacher should be followed, especially from a congregation to another or a denomination to another, one denomination to another.

That's, isn't it what Paul stressed to the Corinthians? He said to them, some of you are saying, I follow Paul, I follow Apollos, I follow Cephas. But even Paul knew that none of them, none of himself or Apollos or Cephas, none of them were perfect.

They all stumbled. Which is why Paul reminded the Corinthians as to who it is that Paul, Apollos and Cephas, who it is they preach about. He told them in chapter one, we preach Christ crucified.

[12 : 37] Therefore, everyone should be saying, I follow Christ. That's what my desire is for our congregation. Everyone will say, I follow Christ.

Because Jesus Christ, he is the Prince of Preachurch and he doesn't stumble in what he says. And his words, they are the only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And so James is speaking about four things in relation to our tongue. And the first thing he speaks about is stumbling. He speaks about stumbling. But secondly, he speaks about steering. He speaks about steering.

Look at verse three. He says, If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also. Though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder, whatever the will of the pilot directs.

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

[13 : 47] 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. So we're looking at steering.

We said a moment ago that Jesus, he's the prince of preachers. He doesn't stumble. He never stumbled in what he said. He was, as James says, he was the perfect man and he was the perfect preacher.

And you know, every preacher since, they have tried to model themselves on Jesus, the perfect preacher. Every preacher has tried the same techniques as Jesus has.

because when we consider, well, the Sermon on the Mount, you could call the Sermon on the Mount the perfect sermon. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeatedly used the same method in delivering his teaching.

And there are many books that have been written on preaching because of that and how to preach because of Jesus' method. Because the method which Jesus used when preaching was the simple method of state, illustrate, apply.

[14 : 53] State, illustrate, apply. And with James being, you could say, he's the younger brother of Jesus, you can take an educated guess as to how he learned how to preach.

Because when we look at these verses, James uses the same method as Jesus did. The method of state, illustrate, apply. And he's already made a statement and he made the statement back in chapter 1.

We said that earlier. But at the end of chapter 1, he says that if anyone thinks he's religious and does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his own heart and his religion is useless.

That's chapter 1, verse 26. And then from that statement in chapter 1, we see that James, he now moves back to this subject. He moves into making two brilliant and memorable illustrations.

State, illustrate. And the first illustration, as he mentioned in chapter 1, is about bridling the tongue. And so James says that our tongue needs to be controlled and it needs to be steered just like a bit that is in the mouth of a horse.

[16 : 04] The horse rider puts the bit into the horse's mouth so that the horse is not directing the rider but the rider is directing the horse. And I'm not too familiar about horses but I suppose if you know anything about them you'll know that the bit in the horse's mouth is not overly comfortable for the horse.

The horse is always aware that there's this bit of metal in between its teeth. But it's that bit of metal that reminds the horse who is in control.

Because as soon as the rain is pooled by the rider and the bit in the horse's mouth pools back on the horse's mouth the horse turns its head to whatever direction the rider wants to go.

And as long as that bit is in the horse's mouth the horse will make no objections and the entire horse is then under control. But in order to emphasise the point James makes this second memorable illustration by talking about the rudder of a ship.

He says in verse 4 look at the ships also. Though they are so large and are driven by strong winds they're guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

[17 : 22] James presents to us a large ship that travels the seas and it's powered by the wind in its sails. But the direction of the ship and the journey which it plots it's all dependent upon the small rudder at the stern of the ship.

And you know thinking about it I'm sure you've all heard that the disaster of 1912 when the Titanic sank to the bottom of the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg many people claimed that the reason the Titanic didn't clear the iceberg completely was because her rudder was too small for the size of the ship.

but that claim wasn't true. The rudder wasn't to blame for the Titanic hitting the iceberg and many have said since that it wasn't the rudder that was at the helm of the Titanic it was the captain.

The captain was to blame because it was the captain who was plotting the course and ultimately it was the captain who was steering the ship. And that's what James says here that the ship goes in the direction of the will of the captain.

And so if we consider James as two memorable illustrations we have to ask who's in control of the tongue? Who's in control of the tongue? Because if the tongue is like a horse who is its rider?

[18 : 51] And if the tongue is like a ship who is its captain? Who is its captain? And I want to suggest that what controls the tongue is the heart.

what controls our tongue is our heart. Isn't that what Jesus said? From out of the heart the mouth speaks.

Jesus says that out of the heart of man come evil thoughts sexual immorality theft murder adultery coveting wickedness deceit sensuality envy slander pride foolishness all of these things come from within Jesus said and they defile a person.

And with that and continuing the method of state illustrate apply James he then applies these two memorable statements these memorable illustrations and he says having spoken about the bit and the ship he says so also the tongue it's a small member yet it boasts of great things.

James knows that whatever the tongue says it has been directed and steered by the heart. It's from out of the heart that the mouth speaks.

[20 : 07] But what's remarkable is that James reminds us that there is no other muscle in our body which can cause so much harm and heartache as our tongue.

Yes we can cause physical pain with our fist or our foot and that but that always heals hopefully. But yet when it comes to our tongue the mental affliction and damage it can cause is sometimes indescribable.

And James says that it's like a little spark in a forest. It doesn't take much to set a forest on fire. All it takes is a little spark. A little spark of gossip or criticism or even our tone can cause a fire.

A fire of chaos in our homes our families our marriages our church or even among our friends. It doesn't take much. That's what he's saying. It doesn't take much but the damage can be unimaginable.

And my friend we have to remember that the damage our tongue causes is because of our heart. Therefore we not only need to tame our tongue we also need to guard our heart.

[21 : 18] We need to guard our heart because as James says in verse 6 he says the tongue is a fire a world of unrighteousness and 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.

And James makes very clear to us that our small tongue it has the ability to defile the whole body and even determine the course of our life. Because when our heart is not right and our tongue is out of control it has the ability to steer us away from the truth.

And what James means by this is that our words can destroy our witness. Our words can destroy our witness. The way we talk when we're at home with our family or at work with our colleagues or amongst our friends and our neighbours at any time of the day yes we we're all able to put on our Sunday speech and when we're in church or in fellowship but if our heart is not right and our tongue is out of control our words can destroy our witness.

Because our words when they're not tamed and our tongue when it's out of control they have the potential to cause destruction. But where does this potential for destruction come from?

James says it comes from hell. And you know it's a disturbing read. It's disturbing when you see that James speaks about hell in relation to our tongue.

[23 : 04] But he's actually using the name of a place outside Jerusalem when he uses the word hell because the word for hell in the original language is the word Gehenna.

The word Gehenna and Gehenna it's said to be the Valley of Hinnom which was on the south side of the city of Jerusalem. And the Valley of Hinnom it was like a steep ravine it was like a cliff face where at the bottom of the ravine there was this fire that was continually burning day and night.

And so Gehenna was this dumping ground you just throw everything over the cliff and there was men at the bottom who were always feeding the fire. It was a pit in which the rubbish of the city would just be thrown down and that rubbish it not only included well whatever they didn't eat or that but it included dead animals and it even included criminals who weren't going to be buried.

They'd just throw them onto the rubbish heap and they were thrown into Gehenna. It was thrown into the fires of hell and consumed. Nothing escaped the fires of Gehenna.

And as you know Jesus he often uses this word Gehenna in order to give a vivid description of the eternal punishment that the ungodly receive. But James uses it in order to stress that if our heart is not right and our tongue is out of control then what we are saying is from the pit of hell.

[24 : 35] it's strong words strong language but my friend if our heart is not right and our tongue is out of control then our words are likely to be filthy destructive and bearing the stench of death.

And so what do we do with a tongue that is set on fire by hell? What do we do with it? Well James says that we need to overcome evil with good. We need to suppress our tongue.

We need to subdue it. We need to subdue the tongue and that's what we see thirdly. In the passage James is speaking about four things in relation to our tongue. He speaks about stumbling, he speaks about steering, then he speaks about subduing.

Subduing. If you look at verse 7 he says for every kind of beast and bird of reptile and sea creature can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

But no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

[25 : 45] From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. And so in verse 7 we see that James, he moves away from the illustrations of the bit in the horse's mouth and the rudder of the ship and the fire in the forest.

And he now speaks about the creation itself. And he says that every kind of beast of the field and every bird of the air and every reptile and every sea creature, they can all be tamed by mankind.

And they have been tamed by mankind, he says. And James, he's already given an example of a tamed animal with the illustration of the horse. When the wild horse has been tamed, it can not only be ridden, it can also be used to work, to pull the plough.

But James' use of language here, it's very, very interesting because this fourfold division of the animal kingdom, the beasts, the birds, the reptiles, and the sea creature, the list, it reflects the creation account in Genesis 1.

We're told there in Genesis chapter 1 that on the sixth day, God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, and over all the earth, over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[27 : 13] And then we're told that God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female. And then it says that God blessed them, God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.

Subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, over every living thing that moves on the earth. And so the command that was given to Adam to have dominion and subdue the creatures of the earth, that's what James is referring to here.

That as mankind we are given the mandate and the authority to tame the animals of the earth and we're able to do that. We've done it. But then he says when it comes to our own tongue, no one is able to tame it.

And James stresses the no one. He emphasises it because it's our tongue which corrupts our whole nature and it's what causes us to stumble and no one is able to tame it.

And this is why James gives this double description of our tongue you could say. He says that it's a restless evil full of deadly poison. It's a restless evil.

[28 : 30] It's impossible to control and full of venom that inflicts pain and hurt upon others. But, you know, the double description of the tongue, the unruly evil or the restless evil full of deadly poison, that double description, it emphasises the double-mindedness of a person.

If you remember back to chapter one, it's amazing how the whole book, James is going back over things he's just highlighted in the beginning. He draws it out more as he goes through the letter.

And so back in chapter one, James said that a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. That Christian, says James, that's what he's saying, he's inconsistent in their faith because he's trying to please both God and the world at the same time.

But the reality is they're double-minded, they're two-faced, their loyalty is divided. And as Jesus said, when a house is divided against itself, it cannot stand.

It's unable to stand, it's unstable you could say, and eventually it will crumble. And this is what James says about the inconsistency and the instability and even the infidelity of our tongue, that one moment we can use our tongue to praise God.

[29 : 59] We can praise God and worship him for his love towards sinners and the provision, his wonderful provision of salvation. One moment we're praising God, but within a short space of time, James says we're criticising and speaking ill of those same sinners who God loves and who God has saved with the same precious blood that he saved us with.

And James says this is the greatest contradiction, this is the greatest inconsistency, this is the greatest instability to our Christianity that out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing.

And again with such compassion and care and even concern, James says my brothers, these things ought not to be.

These things ought not to be. My friend, we have to seek to guard our heart and tame our tongue. And you know, with this James, he hammers the point home.

Looking at it, it's like, can you take any more? But he hammers the point home that an inconsistent heart and an uncontrollable tongue, they're incompatible with the Christian life.

[31 : 25] And he makes this point down in verses 11 and 12, with these three inconsistent illustrations. He says in verse 11, does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?

Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. And so with every illustration, James is stressing that nothing in nature can produce two things at once.

So why do we? because a water spring, it can't produce fresh water one day and then salt water the next. It has to be, or it has to produce one or the other.

And a fig tree can't produce anything other than figs, because that's what it was created to do. It can produce olives, just like a vine tree can produce figs.

It's not what they were created to do. And the point which James is driving home is, if our heart is not guarded, then how can we expect our tongue to be any different?

[32 : 35] Because if our heart is impure, how can we expect it to bring forth anything other than fruit that is impure? And you know, there's no hiding from these verses.

We all know that these verses are speaking to us. addressing me personally. And we can even think maybe even about things we've said today, and the way we've spoken to someone, the way we've spoken about someone, and how our mouth, you could say it has vomited speech that was unbefitting for a Christian, and not fruitful in any way.

But the reality is, once it's out, it's out. We can't take it back, which is why we have to guard it. And we have to tame it.

Guard the heart, tame the tongue. And you know, even if it's said under our breath, God still heard it. Which is frightening. So challenging.

And that's why we have to be wise in what we say, by guarding the heart and taming the tongue. We have to be wise. And that's what we see in these closing verses.

[33 : 50] James speaks about wisdom. He's spoken about stumbling, spoken about staring, spoken about subduing. Lastly and briefly, he speaks about sowing.

Speaks about sowing. Look at verse 13. He says, who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly and spiritual demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder in every vile practice.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere, and a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

And so in these closing verses, James emphasizes what our tongue should be used for. He says that when we don't guard our heart or tame our tongue, he says we don't possess godly wisdom.

[35 : 02] As James says, godly wisdom is displayed by our character as a Christian and our dealings with other people. But the problem with our tongue, and James has highlighted this problem back in verse 5, he said that our tongue boasts of great things.

Boasts of great things. The tongue will always boast of good character, a godly life, biblical wisdom, a faithful Christian witness. But James says that's not wisdom.

That's a tongue which has been set on fire by hell. Because the wisdom that is from above, he says, it doesn't boast. It's evidenced by a character and a conduct of meekness and humility.

But James says if someone boasts, their heart is full of jealousy and selfish ambition and their faults. They're a contradiction. They're not spiritual, he says, but earthly, worldly, demonic.

They're out for themselves. And James says, down in verse 16, for where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

[36 : 16] That's not Christian, he says. That's not godly wisdom. No, James says this is godly wisdom. Verse 17, but the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. And what James is saying to us is that we need to be sowers. We need to be sowers and we need to sow good seed.

Because as those who profess the name of Christ, we are not to be sowing seeds of discord, seeds of gossip, seeds of rumor, seeds of hurt, seeds of anger, seeds of disunity.

No, James says that's not fitting for a Christian. No, we need to be sowing good seed. We need to be sowing seeds of grace, seeds of mercy.

We need to be sowing the fruit of the Spirit. We need to sow seeds of love, seeds of joy, seeds of peace, seeds of patience, kindness, seeds of goodness, seeds of faithfulness, seeds of gentleness, seeds of self-control.

[37 : 39] We need to sow good seed. We need to sow good seed. A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

seed. We need to sow good seed. And so James has addressed us all individually this evening. He wants us to leave here different to the way we came in.

Because in this passage James has spoken to us about four things in relation to our tongue. Stumbling, steering, subduing, and sowing.

And so the question James wants us to leave with is what kind of sower are we going to be? What kind of sower are we going to be?

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we realise, Lord, when we study thy word, how far short we come.

[38 : 50] And Lord, thou art one who points out to us all our flaws, our faintings and our failings. But we thank thee and we praise thee that despite all our faintings and all our failings, that the testimony of each and every one of us is that God doth fail me never, the one who is our rock and our fortress, the one who covers all our iniquities, forgives our transgression and deals with all our sin.

And Lord, that thou wouldst forgive us. Forgive us, Lord, for our tongue, that it truly is a world of iniquity set on fire by hell.

Help us to tame it by thy spirit, the enabling of thy spirit. Help us to guard our heart by searching the scriptures daily, by reminding ourselves of what we are to be like, that we are those, Lord, who are to walk in the light, as thou art in the light, because when we do, we shall have fellowship with thy son, and we shall have fellowship with one another.

And Lord, we pray that, oh, that we would cling to the promise that if we confess our sin, thou art faithful and just, to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Cleanse us, Lord, this evening. Help us to leave here different to the way we came in, to be sowers of good things, to sow that good seed, that we may be witnesses for thee, to tell those round about us of the Christ who loved us and who gave himself for us.

[40 : 27] Remember our homes and our families, we pray. Remember those who are not with us this evening. Be near them wherever they are. And Lord, that thou wouldst keep us. Keep us, for we cannot keep ourselves, and keep our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and even forevermore.

Do us good, we ask thee, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 34. Psalm 34, the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 34, Psalm 34, Psalm 34, Psalm 34, Psalm 34, Psalm 34, we're singing from verse 8, down to the verse marked 15. Psalm 34, from verse 8, O taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed.

Fear God, his saints, none that him fear, shall be with want oppressed. The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

Down to the verse marked 15 of Psalm 34, to God's praise. O taste and see that God is good, who trusts in his best.

[41 : 51] Fear God, his saints, none that him fear, shall be with want to rest.

The lions young may hungry be, and they may have their food, but they that truly seek the Lord, shall not lack any good.

O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear.

I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear.

What modest he that my desire have goods see itself shall be.

[43 : 27] Think of your son. Or wages thou returns forces and happiest. Than ta' whoever may tramines.

Hither do, am I a seek peace, pursue eternity.

God's eyes are on the justice years are open to their cry.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.