

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

BRIDLES-RUDDERS-TONGUES

James 3:2-5 “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. 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 wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also, the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.”

An average horse weighs 1,000 pounds. An air craft carrier with sailors, full complement of planes and all needed supplies can weigh as much as 100,000 tons. An average male tongue weighs .1543235835 pounds and a female’s a little less. A typical bridle for a horse weighs a couple of pounds, the rudder on an air craft carrier weighs a few tons and your tongue weighs a few ounces. What do these three have in common? The answer is they are responsible for the “course” the ship, horse and a person takes.

What is therefore critical is all three must be controlled. The sailor at the “helm” makes adjustments to the rudder which in turn causes the ship to set its proper course. The bridle in the hands of the rider gives the horse the guidance for the direction it is to go. What then concerning the tongue?

Proverbs 15:1-2 says of the tongue, “A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing, but the mouth of a fool belches out foolishness.” (New Living Translation) James 3:9-10 says regarding our use of the tongue, “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” Peter wrote, “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.” (1 Peter 3:10)

God has given you your tongue to speak words of blessing, comfort, peace, and promise. These words come from His word of grace and mercy (The Gospel.) Your words of love toward others are prompted by the love you have received from him. Speaking His Gospel word, blessed by the Holy Spirit, has the power to

convert those who hear what you say from unbelief and change their course from hell to heaven.

Prayer: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, O Lord, be acceptable to You. Amen

We praise You, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before You, we kneel and adore You;
We bless Your holy name, glad praises we sing.

We worship You, God of our fathers, we bless You;
Through trial and tempest our guide You have been.
When perils o'ertake us, You will not forsake us,
And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.

With voices united our praises we offer
And gladly our sons of thanksgiving we raise.
With You, Lord, beside us, Your strong arm will guide us.
To You, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!
(LSB 785)