

Title: AN OVERFLOW OF SPEAKING, JAMES 5:7 – 20
(Chatham, NJ; 09/27/15, AM) [Pc – Exegesis]

Theme: James not only gives a final exhortation, much of which is on the use of the tongue, but he also implies the overflow from the heart that produces what he exhorts.

Purpose: To encourage the audience to follow James' exhortations and to examine the condition of the heart that produces a positive response to them.

Introduction:

1. James finishes with a flourish of ways that we use our tongues, though I don't want to categorize these as merely appropriate speech.
2. The issues involving these matters of speech reflect underlying matters of the heart; as Jesus says, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks," Mt. 12:34.
3. What is the condition of the heart that prompts the use of the tongue in these things?
4. What is the overflow out of which we speak appropriately?

I. Don't Grumble, verse 9

A. Grumbling in their midst

1. Numbers 11:4 mentions the rabble with a "strong craving"
2. Might this be the same desires that wage war with in them, 4:1?
3. What might the "grumbling against one another" have sounded like?

B. The overflow of impatience

1. "Be patient" is his first exhortation, 7
2. Grumbling comes from impatience filling the heart
3. Remember the prophets—who must have been exceedingly disturbed by their own countrymen
4. Remember Job—who struggled with God
5. First, establish your hearts: develop a firm commitment to be faithful
6. Second, remember that the judge is standing at the door
7. Therefore, don't grumble

II. Don't Swear, 12 (above all?)

- An oath is supposed to affirm one's truthfulness (like an alcoholic I once knew who swore he wasn't drinking)
- Why do we need an oath in the first place?
- What is wrong with operating on your word?
- Why do we need lawyers to enforce everything?
- Might it be because we can't be trusted and can't trust anyone to do what they say?
- Integrity is the overflow of the heart
- Mean yes when you say yes; mean no when you say no.

III. Praise and Pray

- Praise when you are cheerful
- Pray when you are suffering
- The leaders are called to pray and the prayer heals, not the oil
- The person's sins will be forgiven if necessary
- The overflow comes from the belief that we need God in the midst of our suffering
- Prayer should be the natural response because we know that God is in control
- We also recognize that only the truth about the condition of the world will set us free from suffering and sin

IV. Confess to and Pray for one another, 16-18

- An awareness of personal sin is what overflows from the heart in this
- Confession helps as do the prayers offered by one another (no mention of the leaders here)
- The healing is both spiritual and physical though not necessarily a direct link
- Sometimes there is: Jesus tells the man at the pool, "Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."
- The power of prayer is one of James' main points
- We are human just as Elijah.
- Does the abundance of faith in our hearts give us the confidence in prayer?
- Do we believe that our prayers are effective?

V. Bring back a wanderer, 19-20

- An activity that involves love, not judgment, 1 Peter 4:8 & Prov. 10:12, since love also covers a multitude of sins
- Paul wrote what he said to the Corinthians out of love, 2 Cor. 2:4
- A spiritual, gentle attitude with effect this best, Gal. 6:1
- Gentle words are powerful, Prov. 15:4, 16:23-24; 25:25
- Love for the lost is the overflow that prompts us to do this: those who have fallen away or those who have never known the way of Christ
- Save them from death; cover a multitude of sins

Conclusions:

1. Negatively, stop grumbling and don't swear.
2. Patience and integrity in your heart will insure you don't do these.
3. Positively, praise, pray, and turn back wanderers.
4. Pray, pray, pray! Forty Days of Prayer (10/17 – 11/25) will be about the power of the prayers of a righteous person. Will you be one of those who pray?