

Poisons We Pick

Introduction:

- I. The saying “Pick your poison” dates back about 150 years, and refers to alcoholic drinks. This is probably due to the effects that alcohol does to the body. Likewise we call those who are drunk “intoxicated.”
 - a. However, although we know the dangers of strong drink, especially when coupled with addiction, it is still a problem for so many people today.
- II. Today’s lesson is not about alcohol. Rather, it is about so many things that we often enjoy, even though we know *their* dangers. All three of these are described in the Bible as “poisons.” They make us spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and sometimes physically sick!

Discussion:

- I. The Tongue – James 3:8 “A deadly poison”
 - a. James uses two really good illustrations to tell of the tongue’s danger.
 - i. A Horse’s Bridle (3)
 - ii. A Ship’s Rudder (4)
 1. It is small, but it can sway something MUCH larger than itself!
 - iii. Likewise, the tongue can be used for much good, like for preventing anger from consuming someone!
 1. Proverbs 15:1a
 - a. However, 15:1b tells the flip-side of the tongue!
 - b. But it is also a fire! (5-6)
 - i. Sets the world on fire, and it is set on fire by hell itself!
 1. In the ESV, Proverbs contains the word “tongue” 19 times, and 16 of those are talking about the dangers of the tongue! Two of the other three talk about the great value of a righteous tongue! Here are some examples:
 - a. 15:2,4; 17:20; 18:21; 21:23; 25:15, 23; 26:28
 - i. Notice the last two—gossip ruins the reputation of the GOSSIPER, and lying reflects HATRED!
- II. Bad Attitude – Acts 14:2 “They poisoned their minds...”
 - a. One of the quickest ways to ruin the effectiveness of a group of Christians or anyone else is to spread a bad attitude among them, as I Corinthians 15:33 says!
 - i. The reason we discussed first the matter of the tongue as a poison is that the tongue often leads to the poisoning of the mind! They are not completely separated!
 1. Hosea 10:4 – Their words were crooked, but that lead to a poisoning of judgment!
 2. Think of where your blessings originate. Think of all the personal battles you win that you could not overcome without God or your church family. Now I want you to look at your current “bad” situation. Is it any different? Can God or his family not get you through it, too?
 - a. Deuteronomy 32:28-34
 - ii. Not only does the tongue lead to a bad attitude, a bad attitude also leads to poor use of the tongue! It is a nasty, vicious cycle.
 1. Psalm 140:1-3
- III. Denial of My Situation
 - a. This was the number one poison of the people of Judah and Israel just before they were taken into captivity at the end of the Old Testament
 - b. Our attitudes must be influenced and guided by the Bible. Our understanding of God’s word becomes our method of judgment for what is right and wrong for us to do.

- i. Jeremiah 9:12-15 – Those who turn away from the Bible to do their own thing will end up being poisoned
- c. We can convince everyone else that we are doing great and being faithful, and we might even fool ourselves into thinking that everything is fine. However, we will one day give account!
 - i. Matthew 12:36 – of every idle word
 - ii. Romans 2:6-11 – of everything we’ve done
 - iii. Romans 3:9-18 – Paul is quick to dispel any idea that we are okay in our relationship with God.
- d. There is a simple test to see whether you have been poisoned with this denial: the fruit you have borne for the gospel!
 - i. Matthew 7:16-20 – What kind of tree are you?
 - 1. I can look at a lemon tree or an orange tree, or an apple tree, and I know what kind of tree it is.
 - 2. If God were to say, “whatever tree brings forth sour fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire,” I would know for a fact that the lemon tree is on its way out!
 - 3. What kind of fruit are you bringing forth?
 - a. If you have not borne fruit, it is simply that you are not continuing in the vine!
 - i. John 15:4-6
 - 1. Abide (continue) in the vine (Romans 11:17-22)
 - 2. By faith, become children of God in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).