

If you can't say something nice...

Readings	1) Isaiah 50:4-10 2) James 3:1-12 3) Mark 9:14-29
Scripture Focus	James 3:1-12
Take Away	
Aids (pics, props, etc.)	

Message

Has anybody ever said anything mean to you? Sometimes people say things that hurt our feelings. Have any of you every said anything mean to somebody else? Sometimes we do that too. Today I want to tell you a story about **Lily and Billy Lamb and the Mean Kids**.

One beautiful day, Lily and Billy Lamb were out in the pasture playing with the other lambs. All the lambs were running around the trees and at the edge of the field, stopping to eat a few flowers along the way. The shepherd was laughing as He watched them play. He loved all of his little lambs.

As they were playing a game, it was Billy lamb's turn to jump over a big rock. He was scared. He wasn't sure he could jump that high. Then he heard one of the other lambs laugh and say, "Billy's scared. He's not a good jumper." A few of the other lambs laughed too. Billy thought he might be able to jump over that rock until he heard those mean words. The Shepherd watched and listened.

A few minutes later, the Shepherd called Lily over to him and gave her a new blue collar with a shiny bell on it so he could hear her if she got lost. All the lambs got one, but hers was new. "Look at my bell!" Lily said as she laughed and jumped around and made it jingle. When she stopped jumping she saw some of the other lambs pointing at her and laughing. One little lamb shook her head and made her bell tinkle too and said, "Lily, we all have bells. You're not special." Lily felt special until she heard those mean words. The Shepherd watched and listened.

The Shepherd called all his lambs together. "My dear little lambs," he said softly, "what mean words I hear coming out of your mouths. We can talk to the Lord and thank him for our many gifts with our mouths or say very mean things that hurt others. God loves them as much as he loves you. You should not use your tongue to hurt anyone. It makes me sad when you do that." He waited a few moments before saying, "Does anyone have anything to say to Billy and Lily?"

The lambs looked at the grass they were standing on until one finally took a step forward, looked at Billy, and said, "I'm sorry Billy, I don't want to make you feel bad." He looked at the Shepherd, put his head down and said, "I'm sorry Shepherd, I don't want to be a mean lamb."

Then another lamb walked over to Lily and said, "I'm sorry Lily, your new bell is beautiful. I don't want to make you feel bad either. She too, looked at the Shepherd and said, "I'm sorry Shepherd. I'll try harder to say nice things."

The Shepherd smiled at all of them and said, "You are forgiven. Now, let that be done. Let's go to the pasture with the yummy flowers!"

What good and helpful things could those other lambs have said to Billy to make him feel like he could jump over the rock? ["Go Billy! You can do it!"] What good and helpful things could those other lambs have said to Lily when they saw her new bell? ["Nice bell, Lily, now you can feel safe like us."]

Jesus, our Shepherd wants all of His little sheep to be nice to each other and say good and helpful things, not mean and hurtful things. Why? Because HE LOVES US! He doesn't want us to be meanies.

Let's pray.

Repeat Prayer

Dear Shepherd Jesus,
You are only good / and you want us / to be good too.
Help us to be nice / and not say mean things.
Thank you for loving us.
We love you. Amen.