

## **The Medium to Reveal Truth**

Many years ago, 'an Englishman went abroad, leaving his much-loved dog and servant home. While away, the man received a cablegram from the servant with the message saying, "Your dog died". The man was most distraught both at the news and the abrupt manner it was sent. Upon returning home, he upbraided the servant for not breaking the news to him more gently. Confused, the servant asked his master how such news could have been delivered more gently. The man said he could have sent a first cable saying, "Your dog is stuck on the roof". This could be followed the next day with the message, "Your dog fell from the roof and is doing poorly". Later a third message could have said, "Your beloved dog has gone to his eternal reward". Some time afterwards, the man went abroad again. While there, he received a cable from his servant saying, "Your mother is stuck on the roof".' // Here's another story: 'A mother was writing an excuse for her first-grader, who had been home with a stomachache. As the child observed her writing, he said, "Okay, but don't say I threw up. I want to save that for 'Show and Tell'.'

Both of these jokes reveal different ways to convey truth. The first is for those people who can't take the whole truth all at once. The second is for those with a more visually-oriented learn-

ing style. Like the younger generations today who were raised on television, and then the internet, and more recently still, YouTube and TikTok videos. We here are a very traditional church. Except for three times a year, we never use any visual “aids” during our services. With the exception of Holy Communion, nearly everything we do is verbal only. For most of us, this is fine because we were raised to learn, to pass on knowledge, and to take our cues in life verbally, not requiring visual aids. I am often irked by the overwhelming use of “icons” in today’s world, where icons replace words. Remember when elevator buttons would say “OPEN” and “CLOSE”? At a glance I knew immediately which button to push if someone wanted to enter the elevator as the doors were closing. Nowadays, there are these symbols, these icons, and I look and have to figure out in my mind which means which, and often, in that extra second or two of mental deliberation, it becomes too late to hold the elevator for someone to enter or exit at the last second. But that’s just me. Surely younger people would have greater difficulty deciphering words rather than the symbols.

Which is all a roundabout way of explaining one of the many reasons why Lord Jesus told so many parables. For though they are verbal, they’re stories which conjure in the listeners’ minds a progression of images not unlike a video clip. At the same time, the parables also present essential truths in a “gentle”, indirect way that those who would recoil at, be offended by, or otherwise summarily reject, can accept. It’s also been pointed out that when

Lord Jesus used parables, particularly in the hearing of His enemies, He expressed truths and facts, that clearly indicted and condemned them, without actually using words for which they could charge Him with the crime of libel or slander. He could remain within the letter of their laws, but still tell them exactly what's what, and they would know it. But Lord Jesus didn't tell all the Bible's parables. Depending on how one defines what exactly constitutes a parable, there are over 50 of them in the New Testament. Including the Old Testament, to name just the two we read today in Ezekiel, there are some 250 parables in the entire Bible. Why so many of them? Why did God use them so frequently?

Well, Lord Jesus answered that question in multiple ways, in several places, one in today's lesson in Mark 4:24-25. "Be diligent to understand the meaning behind everything you hear, for as you do, more understanding will be given to you. And according to your longing to understand, much more will be added to you. For those who listen with open hearts will receive more revelation. But those who don't listen with open hearts will lose what little they think they have!" This answer here shows that parables both reveal and conceal. There is far more meaning in a parable than can be expressed purely verbally. Why do you think Father God so often communicates with us through dreams and visions? Yes, He does use words, but usually those types of answers are simple and relate to a specific question or situation weighing on our minds. But in dreams or visions, which are quite similar, one

being while one is asleep and the other being while one is awake, vastly more information, knowledge and wisdom is communicated than just what could be conveyed verbally. Imagine, if God gave you an article to read. How impactful would that be? On the other hand, if He gave you a dream in “living color”, would that be more impactful, more meaningful? It’s no accident that we have the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words”.

So Lord Jesus told many parables, which are essentially visual images conjured up in the minds of the hearers related in story form. They convey far more meaning than the mere words themselves say. And in our lesson from Mark 4, our Lord gives us some vital truths about them that determine how effective, successful, and valuable the lives we live while in this world ultimately are. Our Lord commands us to “be diligent to understand the meaning”. Though we see in our mind’s eye the storyline the parable is describing, the full meaning is often not immediately apparent. We have to think about it. We have to deliberate on it. We have to meditate on it. Is this not exactly how we are to approach the Bible as a whole? God went to great pains to give us His written word, including all these hundreds of parables! In our Bibles, Holy Spirit had to find at least 40 men over thousands of years who would faithfully record God’s words in the Holy Bible.

God is not writing more Scriptures today. So the Bible is precious, indeed for many people groups in the world, more precious even than life itself! Yet here in America, most of us have

multiple Bibles just lying around. Indeed, even on that cart by the desk, there are several copies of the Bible never opened. In America, we are in some ways, overly blessed, too blessed. The Bible can be found in so many places, often in hotel room drawers! And so it seems to have lost its value in the sight of many Americans. Do you treasure it? Enough to read it, daily? Or are there far more important things in your life, that you simply don't have time for it? If that's the case, you're living your life totally upside down. Life must be hard going from day to day. Without the nourishment that comes from daily reading His word, daily spending time with your Father in prayer and quiet meditation, things simply do not go well. As the old hymn goes, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear—All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!"

But times have been changing. Where even whole Bibles may not have been readily available, the Ten Commandments would be posted somewhere nearby. The Words of God literally permeated our society, our country. But in the last half century, demonically-inspired secularists, humanists, globalists, communists, marxists, leftists, anarchists, intellectuals, scientists, teachers and academics, politicians, and all those people who think highly of themselves, have worked diligently to remove God's Words from our nation, our country, indeed, from all the countries of the world where it was once highly esteemed, respected, and honored. Can you imagine that a residential senior center has

evicted an elderly grandmother because she was holding a Bible study? Supposedly in today's "enlightened" world, we must rid ourselves of all "hate" speech, for, unless you hadn't heard, the Bible is just chock full of hate speech, offending people "right and left". And so, if the Bible can be tolerated at all, it must be rewritten, or better yet, just outlawed completely.

Do you want to give up your Bibles? Never read it again? Do you want to forget all about the Lord? If not, then stand up and be counted in the Lord's army! Get serious about being a Christian in the current climate of anti-goodness, anti-truth. Join the "resistance" which Holy Spirit is raising up all over the earth! Pray!! Last Pentecost Sunday, over 12,000 mostly young people were baptized in California alone! The tide is turning, because God wills it so. And He's willing it in response to the prayers of His people. As Lord Jesus said in Mark 4:24-25, the more we long to understand, that much and more will He add to our understanding. If we listen with open hearts, He will pour out on us much, much more revelation. Conversely, those who don't listen, like the Pharisees of old and those of today, what little sense they have they'll lose. They'll become mindless, even insane. Such people have been governing us for far too long. Pray now and vote them permanently out of office! If you want to know God more, get serious and He will reward you with wisdom, with people to help, with strategies to deal with the issues in your life. For as can never be said enough: He loves you, He really does!!

