

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Make it Clear!
Keynote - Clear Word Conference

2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. **3** At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— **4** that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:2-4 ESV

[CLEAR GLASS]

“On the precipice of contemporary judicial disparity there is a convergence of collateral conditions produced by conflicting causes thereby accelerating associated anthropological and societal conflagration, and the resultant illustrated harmonious dissonance limits the broad spectrum of illumination and a passion for mediocrity flourishes in a vacuum of epistemological influences.”

... Some might say, “Wow, that’s deep!”

... Others might say, “What did he just say?” (*That’s the honest ones!*)

They are all very fine words ... And they might just mean something ... But we are not sure...

[Legalese]

In the legal community a term is used to describe the abundance of words without a clear meaning ... *Legalese*. Martin Cutts, in “Oxford Guide to Plain English” said,

- “**Legalese** is one of the few social evils that can be eradicated by careful thought and disciplined use of a pen. It is doubly demeaning: first it demeans its writers, who seem to be either deliberately exploiting its power to dominate or are at best careless of its effects; and second it demeans its readers by making them feel powerless and stupid.”

(Martin Cutts, *Oxford Guide to Plain English*, 3rd ed. Oxford Univ. Press, 2009)

- **Preaching & teaching can't be that way...**

THE ORANGE GIFT (An example of the ills of *legalese*)

[Orange]

When a layperson wants to give you an orange, he or she merely says, “**I give you this orange.**” But when a lawyer does it, the words he or she uses are:—

“Know all persons by these present that I hereby give, grant, release, convey, transfer and quitclaim all my right, title, interest, benefit and use whatsoever in, or and concerning this chattel, otherwise known as an orange, or citrus aurantium, together with all the appurtenances thereto of skin, pulp, pip, rind, seeds and juice to have and to hold the said

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orange, [you get the picture...] for his own use and behoof, to himself and his heirs, in fee simple forever, free from all liens, encumbrances, easements, limitations, restraints or conditions whatsoever, any and all prior deeds, transfer, or other documents whatsoever, now or anywhere made to the contrary notwithstanding, with full power to bite, cut, suck or otherwise eat the said orange or to give away the same, with or without its skin, pulp, pip, rind, seeds or juice.”

<http://board.jokeroo.com/funny-jokes/78698-orange-gift-example-legalese.html>

[Preaching]

I have grown up hearing preaching and teaching ... A lot of it. Some of it good...

I've seen a lot of trends in teaching and preaching. Some of them have brought clarity and understanding to the Scripture ... Others have served selfish causes.

I've heard long sermons with *little* real content ... Lots of emotion and energy ... *Without* making a valid point.

I've enjoyed the activity, the exercise, and the fellowship with others, but often left without a clue as to what was preached.

I've heard a supportive congregation say ... “Wow, that was deep.” *being interpreted*, “I have no idea what he said.”

On the other hand I have heard incredible men and women of God open the word of God with the skill of a surgeon and reveal plain truths from the text in such a way that even today I can remember their message. **They “made it clear.”**

One of the most memorable itinerant preachers who came through my home church in Lincoln, Arkansas was a thin, elderly, Bible teacher, wearing a black bow-tie, **Henry Ivy**. He taught the Scripture and drew stick figures on an old backboard perched on a three legged easel. The influence of his teaching lives on in my teaching ministry.

Preach Simply

The first few years of ministry my goal was to preach the “deep things of God” ... *As I matured I began to try to preach to make it plain...*

[Adv]

-Commission was to preach ... “the Gospel” Mk 16

-To teach “the things I have have commanded” Mt 28

[Paul]

1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul wrote that Christ sent me “... to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. **18** For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Nothing but “Jesus Christ, crucified” (Paul)

1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, ... did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. **2** For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ... **4** And my speech and

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my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

[Deep]

The Word of God IS deep, beyond what we will every fully explore or understand ... But it is also to be presented **simple, understandable**, *so that a fool can find truth!*

[Tension]

Tension of incredible depth and explainable simplicity.

Oh the depth of His love // simple gospel that a fool can readily embrace

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

Previously Paul said (11:25) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Ephesians 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— **19** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The mystery of Christ

Paul said, “to speak the **mystery of Christ**,” (TEXT Colossians 4:3)

NLT **Ephesians 3:8** Though I am the least deserving of all God’s people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. **9** I was chosen to explain to everyone this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

Great is the *mystery* of godliness ... God was **manifest** in the flesh, **seen** of angels, **preached** to the Gentiles, **believed** on in the world, **received** up into glory.

[Light]

Word is not about a private interpretation ... *That leads to spiritual pride, arrogant ignorance*

NIV 1:19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. **21** For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

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NKJ 2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; **20** knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, [b] **21** for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the name of Jesus is not veiled in hidden code or steeped in the mysteries of the ancient text ... It is the most understandable, plain, defensible, evidential, CLEAR teaching of Scripture.

“be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin”

[Deep]

Koine Greek is the Greek of the NT. Homer's, *The Iliad and the Odyssey* was written in Classical Greek over 700 years before the NT was written. At some point in history someone come up with the idea that Koine Greek was “special” language, a *“Holy Ghost language,”* perhaps God created just for the writing of the NT.

In time archaeologist and historians discovered many everyday items written in the same text: wills, private letters, receipts, even shopping lists, confirming that the NT Greek was the “common” language of the people at the time of Christ. **Koine means “common.”** The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers to write in the most common communication language available.

MAKE IT CLEAR!

The early Catholic church rooted in the use of Latin, decided that their priests should speak in LATIN and the sacraments should be in LATIN ... *Even when it was no longer relevant! Even when their congregants no longer spoke or understood the language...*

[1611]

KJV of 1611 was translated into the “common language” of the people of England ...

English! (Believe it or not people once spoke like that!) It was updated for the changes in language in 1769 (*our authorized version*) ... And a plethora of translations have emerged since then **The underlying purpose of any translation should be to make it understandable in “today’s language” while preserving the original intent of the text.**

MAKE IT CLEAR!

[moneycode]

I’m sorry, but I’m not looking for some hidden secret code in the Bible...

I’m not wasting my time with numerology deriving special significance from every use of a number in the text. Counting letters to decipher some “secret code” in the Scripture.

I’m not delving into endless analogies or allegorical interpretations of obscure passages hoping to find some secret doctrine that has eluded biblical scholars for centuries...

[CLEAR]

Let us seek to **MAKE IT CLEAR** ... Look for the plain meaning of the text. *The Bible is not a mystery novel!*

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Vain repetition

Matthew 6:7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Endless genealogies

I Timothy 1:3 "... I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. **4** Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations,[a] which don't help people live a life of faith in God.

5 The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. **6** But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. **7** They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently."

[TEXT]

Three elements emerge from the passage:

1. Prayer with thanksgiving

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (ESV)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. (NIV)

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. (NLT)

Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. (HCSB)

2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; (NKJ)

Pray for us ... That God may open ...

2. Door for the Word // opportunity for access // freedom for utterance of the message ... to preach Christ

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— (ESV)

And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains (NIV)

3 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. (NLT)

3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the message, to speak the mystery of the Messiah, for which I am in prison, (HCSB)

3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, (NKJ)

3. Make it clear // manifest // reveal

4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (ESV)

4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (NIV)

4 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. (NLT)

4 so that I may reveal it as I am required to speak. (HCSB)

4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. (NKJ)

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4 Pray that I can speak in a way that will make it clear, as I should. (New Life Version)

THE MESSAGE 2-4 Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don't forget to pray for us, that God will open doors for telling the mystery of Christ, even while I'm locked up in this jail. Pray that every time I open my mouth I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them.

I want to leave you with three things:

1. Prayer is powerful. We know that in theory but let us put it in practice. "Pray diligently!"
2. The Word is unchanging. Forever His Word is settled in heaven. Our challenge is to conform ourselves to the Word of God. Let his truth transform us for the challenge of the next generation
3. The Spirit is dynamic. The Holy Spirit is working in his vibrant and is challenging us today to accomplish the will of God in the earth. Only God can bring revelation ... Illumination ... Clarity in our teaching and preaching. God help us to "Make it Clear!"

[Napoleon - CLOSE]

In Haddon Robinson's classic text, "**Biblical Preaching**," he attributes the general, Napoleon, with this quote. Napoleon was reported to have given 3 commands to his personal messengers.

1. Be Clear!
2. Be Clear!
3. Be Clear!

That's good advice as we share the greatest message in the world!

Matthew Arnold – "Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can.

http://www.ivoroakley.com/Preaching%20Series/in_action.htm

NCV Romans 16:**25** Glory to God who can make you strong in faith by the Good News that I tell people and by the message about Jesus Christ. The message about Christ is the secret that was hidden for long ages past but is now made known. **26** It has been made clear through the writings of the prophets. And by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations that they might believe and obey.

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