



Telling Stories

I'm currently reading *Crucial Conversations*, which is a great book about having hard conversation in a healthy manner. Its target audience is the business world, so it is not religious in nature. With that said, I believe it is beneficial for Christians as well because Paul tells us that we are to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and restore people gently (Gal. 6:1). To use the book's language, Paul is speaking about crucial conversations.

In the most recent chapter I read, the authors made this statement: *you and only you create your emotions*. That is a rather bold statement, don't you think?. Think of how many times you have said, "*He just makes me so mad!*" I've said it many times. The authors write, "*No matter how comfortable it might make you feel saying it - others don't make you mad. You make you mad. You make you scared, annoyed, or insulted. You and only you create your emotions.*"

While having crucial conversations most of us hear or see something, we feel an emotion, and then we act on that emotion (often times in an unhealthy way). We immediately connect the emotion with what we saw or heard, therefore placing the blame for our actions on the other person. What the authors argue is that there is an intermediate step between "*hearing/seeing*" and "*feeling*," and often it is a step we don't even realize we are taking. The intermediate step is that *we tell ourselves a story*. That story we tell ourselves gives meaning (accurate or not) to what we see or hear.

For example, a wife does not respond to her husband's advances. He tells himself that it is because she does not find him attractive anymore and she does not like being intimate with him. He feels like less of a man, and resorts to visibly pouting or storming off in anger. It was *his* story that created the emotions, not the negative response to his advances. The fact is that she never said any of that, nor does she feel that way. She was simply tired after working 8 hrs, cooking dinner, and putting the kids to bed.

The key to having healthy dialogue during crucial conversations is to be aware of the stories we are telling ourselves in those moments (*Are they accurate? Are they based on facts?*). Master those stories, and control the emotions rather than letting the emotions control us.

One of the ways you can master your story is by thinking the best of the other person next time you are in a crucial conversation with them. It will shape the story you tell yourself about their actions or words, and it will go a long way in helping you speak the truth in love, rather than letting your emotions control your actions.

-Gilbert

Advent

This week is the first week of Advent. Advent marks the beginning of the liturgical calendar and serves as a time for Christians to especially focus on the coming of Christ. Advent provides an opportunity to remind ourselves that while giving and receiving gifts is fun, the true celebration is all about Christ.

Advent is a season of hopeful expectation and waiting. It emulates Mary's expectation to give birth, the Israelites expectation of a Messiah to rescue them from their oppression, and our own expectation of Christ's second coming, where he will come back to earth to fully establish his kingdom, of which we are already a part.

It's pretty easy to get swept up in the trappings of Christmas—the decorating, the songs, the present-purchasing, and the parties. This is why I believe it is important to observe and celebrate Advent. Every day we are pounded by marketing messages from companies demanding our money: Black Friday, Cyber Monday, Small Business Saturday! The celebration of Advent is our own little daily message to ourselves, reminding us of the importance of the coming of Christ who said: "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Luke 4:18-21).

-Phil Travis



Angels' Place Orphanage Update

This Sunday morning, **December 4**, during the regular Bible class hour, all adult classes will be meeting in the auditorium to hear **Jan Swensen** (Rick's brother) give us a report about the ongoing work taking place in India through **Angels' Place Orphanage**. You'll want to be sure to come hear about this important ministry at 9:30.



*Church Family,
Thank you so much for showering us with your love and kindness. We are so excited to be bringing our baby boy into this community. Thank you for enabling us to ready our home for the new addition to our family. We love you all!*
—Phil & Katy Travis

Prayer Shawl Meeting December 12



Prayer Shawl Ministry

The ongoing Prayer Shawl Ministry, hosted by Rose Hunt each month at her home, 5911 Bittersweet Dr., West Lafayette, will meet **December 12 from 7:00–9:00 PM**. Many have been blessed by this ministry!

November 27, 2011

Class: 137 Worship: 226

Contribution: \$6,172.35

Argie Verett is in St. Elizabeth East still having tests. Preliminary reports aren't good....**Herb Whiteman**, Vicki Henke's father, is in serious condition at IU Arnett Health, room 221....**Dorothy Miller** got a good report from her doctor. Final report will not be back until next Tuesday....3 year-old **Cynthia Shattuck** had a tonsillectomy on Monday....**Betty Lucas** will have knee surgery December 8....**Ginger Maxwell-Spenard** will have knee replacement surgery on December 21....Continue praying for **Steve Cable, Cain Harris, Britt Nelson, Mary Weaver, Annie Crowder, Dave Hostetler, Jeanette Tidrick, Janet Achor, Max Raines, Mary Lou Baugh, Marceena Miller, Tammy Beaver, Linda Weeks, Kaden Koebecke, Mickey & Carolyn Rigdon, Marie DeWoody, Wanita White, Phyllis Gray, and Jan Swensen**. *Prayers are asked for Jim Popejoy's family. Jim's 26-year-old son died unexpectedly a few days ago. An autopsy is being done. Several at Elmwood know Jim as he takes care of our heating and cooling at the building.*



Continue to remember the following people who are home-bound or in a nursing care facility: **George Kenworthy, Paul Marks, Delores Hill, Irene Sims, Dorothy Walters, Dovie Hurst, Ethel Cable, Hattie Coffel, Valley Stockton, Henrietta Frampton, Ruth Carter, Clifford Farner, Willie & Calvin Batts, Mary Walker, and Charles & Carolyn Moore.**



In the military: **Matthew Kauffman** is in Germany. **Evan Slaughter** is in Afghanistan. Vicki Henke's nephews (brothers), **Dustin & Zach Whiteman**, have been deployed to Afghanistan.

Pack the Pulpit until December 4



You have **until this Sunday, December 4**, to bring your food donations for our food pantry. We are encouraged by all you have already brought to help our community. Personal care products and paper products are especially hard to keep in stock, but any and everything will be most welcomed. Remember, if you need to bring things during the week, call the office first to make sure someone is here. Thanks, Elmwood, for your generosity.

Holiday Gift Lift for MHA

The Holiday Gift Lift is a program of **Mental Health America** who serves many Tippecanoe county residents. Most needed items include: sweatshirts/suits, sweaters, flannel shirts, hats/gloves, sleepwear, warm socks (XL and 2X+ adult sizes are the most needed). Other items needed: toothbrushes & toothpaste, body wash, body lotions, deodorants, disposable razors. A box for your donations will be put in the Farris Foyer for your gifts. Your gifts are most appreciated at a time when so much is already asked of you.



...and Now for Some Good News

I had the honor this past week of opening up our home for Thanksgiving to the Huff family and a group of international students from his engineering work group at Purdue. I can chalk it up as one of my favorite Thanksgivings, because it was so different. We had folks from China and Pakistan that had never experienced Thanksgiving, and they brought a number of dishes with them that I had never experienced before. It was a time of learning, joy and being thankful in a completely new way.

During the course of the evening, I was talking with one of the students from Pakistan about her country, and told her that I had been in India briefly when I was doing some short term mission work. She asked me what a missionary was, and I tried my best to explain it in some generally spiritual terms, trying not to offend because I don't know her background. She cut right through my wishy-washy answer with an enthusiastic, "So what do you believe about God?"

There it is. The moment we're all praying to have happen in general, but not to us specifically. Someone is begging you for the Gospel, whether they know it or not. What do you say or do? I gave the best answer I possibly could, and I think it opened some good conversation and hopefully some follow up in the coming days. But admittedly, when put on the spot, I struggled to give a good, concise answer for the hope that I have, even though I know that I'm called to be ready to do so at any time (1 Peter 3:15). I'm sure that I am not the only one that has had that moment of hesitancy, either.

Afterward, I really thought about what I said, and it prompted me to look at what others have said in an attempt to give a clear description of the Gospel. I came across this quote from Timothy Keller that is actually in a book about marriage that he wrote, but I think it is one of the best descriptions of the Good News I've heard in a while. *"The Gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the same very time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope. This is the only kind of relationship that will really transform us. Love without truth is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it. God's saving love in Christ, however, is marked by both radical truthfulness about who we are and yet also radical, unconditional commitment to us."*

I'm not going to take Keller's words as mine, but it drove home for me that I better have a compelling way of explaining the Gospel when someone asks me what I believe and why. I encourage you to do the same, especially as we enter into the season of Christmas and people's hearts are naturally inclined to think about a baby in a manger, a fulfilled promise, and God's amazing answer to the ruin of our souls. May you be ready to give the answer for the hope you have this season and every season. After all, it is Good News!
In His Grip, Travis



Each year the elders have suggested we contribute money to a special fund in lieu of sending greetings to one another in the congregation. This year this money will be collected for the flood-ravaged church in Bangkok. The Boyds, Farrell Simmerman and Mandy Anderson participated in LST there in 2008 and are familiar with this area. **You have until December 11** to hand your check to one of the elders, ministers, and/or Sherry Marks or Carol Bell, drop it into the collection plate (with Christmas Card fund designated) or send it to the church via regular mail.

CFE Distribution Day, Dec. 10

There are still ways you can help with *Christmas for Everyone*. Contact Rachel Ravellette or the church office to see how you can help.

Gifts must be brought to the church by this Sunday,

December 4. Distribution

Day is December 10, 9:00 AM, at Elmwood.



**Christmas
for
Everyone**

Snow Servants

Elmwood is in need of some volunteers for light snow removal this winter. You may be asked to assist a senior servant or someone just home from the hospital. All you need is a snow shovel, a loving spirit, and some time to volunteer. Sign up on the back of your yellow attendance card this Sunday with telephone number where you can be reached!



November 30, 7 PM....Bible classes for all

December 10....*Christmas for Everyone* distribution day

December 13, 10 PM-midnight....CSC Midnight Breakfast

**December 17....Youth Group Progressive Dinner,
meet at church @ 4 PM**

December 18, 6:00 PM....Children's Christmas program

December 24, 8:00 PM....Christmas Eve service

December 25....Christmas service, 10:45 only; no Bible classes

Read:
Hosea 9–Obadiah; James, Jude

2011 Spiritual Adventures

Week 49: December 4-10

Tongue in-check

I'm convinced that God must have envisioned my sweet face while inspiring James to write his letter; I have my own sweet face in mind when I read it. And to be honest, reading it makes me a little sick of myself.

One major theme hit me personally: the tongue. James paints a vivid picture of taming the tongue. "All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue" (3:7). As someone who has worked to train a cute little puppy, this puts things into perspective for me and, frankly, overwhelms me. Tongue-taming is hard work, to put it mildly.

So what, exactly, does James have to say about tongue-taming?

I must be "slow to speak, quick to listen, and slow to anger" (1:19, 20).

Failure to keep a tight rein on my tongue devalues my religion (1:26).

My words should convey freedom to those around me (2:12).

I must avoid hypocrisy—praising God yet cursing men, whom He created in His own image (3:9-12).

I must not slander or judge my brothers and sisters (4:11-12).

A tall order, I'd say, as I fall short in one or more of these areas on a regular basis. I must admit that there are days I want to give up on trying so hard. It would be easier to just throw caution to the wind and say whatever I want to.

However, the most compelling reason to give tongue-taming everything I have comes down to this: a quest to be like Christ. Read this while keeping *Jesus's* sweet face in mind: "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (3:18). What a beautiful picture. *This* is the kind of person whose company I'd like to keep. One whose tongue is in-check and whose mind is focused on painting the beautiful picture of Christ for all that she encounters. If this is the person who comes out victorious after battling the tongue, I say, "Bring it on."

—Kate Kerrigan

Weekly Schedule

Sunday	
Worship	8:00 a.m.
Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Worship	10:45 a.m.
Life Groups	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday	
Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

 Our Vision:
Knowing Christ,
Making Christ Known.

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Joe Ruhl	463-7012
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