

Stories, Anecdotes, Jestings, and Joking – Day 25 April 15 2021

An Ambassador for Christ—The minister of the gospel who is a laborer together with God, will learn daily in the school of Christ.... No light, trifling words will fall from his lips; for is he not an ambassador for Christ, bearing a divine message to perishing souls? All jesting and joking, all lightness and trifling, is painful to the cross-bearing disciple of Christ. He is weighed down by the burden he feels for souls. Constantly his heart is drawn out in prayer to God for the gift of His grace, that he may be a faithful steward. He prays to be kept pure and holy, and then refuses to rush heedlessly into temptation. Ev 206.4

He heeds the injunction, “As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”.... Keeping close to his Master, he receives words from Him to speak to the people. Lifting as Christ lifts, loving as Christ loves, working as Christ works, he goes about doing good. He strives with all his power for self-improvement, that by precept and example he may lead others to a purer, higher, nobler life.—[The Review and Herald, January 21, 1902](#). Ev 207.1

Leave a Solemn Impression—Ministers are not to preach men's opinions, not to relate anecdotes, get up theatrical performances, not to exhibit self; but as though they were in the presence of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are to preach the Word. Let them not bring levity into the work of the ministry, but let them preach the Word in a manner that will leave a most solemn impression upon those who hear.—[The Review and Herald, September 28, 1897](#). Ev 207.2

Impress Strangers With Character of the Truth—It is God's will that all parts of His service shall be managed in an orderly, becoming manner, which will impress those strangers who may attend, as well as the regular attendants, with the elevated, ennobling character of the truth and its power to cleanse the heart. Ev 207.3

In His providence God impresses people to attend our tent meetings and church services. Some come from curiosity, others to criticize or ridicule. Often they are convicted of sin. The word spoken in the spirit of love makes a lasting impression on them. How carefully, then, should these meetings be conducted. The words spoken should be of authority, that the Holy Spirit can impress them on minds. The speaker who is controlled by the Spirit of God has a sacred dignity, and his words are a savor of life unto life. Let not unsuitable illustrations or anecdotes be introduced into the discourse. Let the words spoken be for the edification of the hearers.—[Letter 19, 1901](#). Ev 207.4

The Illustrations Christ Used—His [Christ's] messages of mercy were varied to suit His audience. He knew “how to speak a word in season to him that is weary”; for grace was poured upon His lips, that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. He had tact to meet the prejudiced minds, and surprised them with illustrations that won their attention. Ev 208.1

Through the imagination He reached the heart. His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seed, the shepherd and the sheep,—with these objects Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these things of nature, they recalled His words. Christ's illustrations constantly repeated His lessons.—[The Desire of Ages, 254 \(1898\)](#). Ev 208.2

Depreciating the Message—We do not want to lose sight of the peculiar sacredness of this mission of ministering in word and in doctrine to the people. It is the work of the minister to speak the words of truth to the people, solemn, sacred truth. Some form the habit of relating anecdotes in their discourses, which have a tendency to amuse and remove from the mind of the hearer the sacredness of the word which they are handling. Such should consider that they are not giving to the people the word of the Lord. Too many illustrations do not have a correct influence; they belittle the sacred dignity that should ever be maintained in the presentation of the Word of God to the people.—[The Review and Herald, February 22, 1887](#). Ev 208.3

Very Cheap Fodder—There are men who stand in the pulpits as shepherds, professing to feed the flock, while the sheep are starving for the bread of life. There are long-drawn-out discourses, largely made up of the relation of anecdotes; but the hearts of the hearers are not touched. The feelings of some may be moved, they may shed a few tears, but their hearts are not broken. The Lord Jesus has been present when they have been presenting that which was called sermons, but their words were destitute of the dew and rain of heaven. They evidenced that the anointed ones described by Zechariah (see [chapter 4](#)) had not ministered to them that they might minister to others. When the anointed ones empty themselves through the golden pipes, the golden oil flows out of themselves into the golden bowls, to flow forth into the lamps, the churches. This is the work of every true, devoted servant of the living God. The Lord God of heaven cannot approve much that is brought into the pulpit by those who are professedly speaking the word of the Lord. They do not inculcate ideas that will be a blessing to those who hear. There is cheap, very cheap fodder placed before the people.—[Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 336, 337 \(1896\)](#). Ev 209.1

Strange Fire—The object of your ministerial labors is not to amuse. It is not to convey information alone, not merely to convince the intellect. The preaching of the Word should appeal to the intellect and impart knowledge, but it comprises much more than this. The heart of the minister must reach the hearts of the hearers. Some have adopted a style of preaching that does not have a right influence.... Ev 209.2

The minister is using strange fire when he mixes storytelling with his discourses.... You have men of all classes of minds to meet, and as you deal with the Sacred Word, you should manifest earnestness, respect, reverence. Let not the impression be made upon any mind that you are a cheap, surface speaker. Weed out storytelling from your discourses. Preach the Word. You would have had more sheaves to bring to the Master if you had constantly preached the Word. You little understand the soul's great need and longing. Some are wrestling with doubt, almost in despair, almost hopeless.... Ev 210.1

God is offended when His representatives descend to the use of cheap, trifling words. The cause of truth is dishonored. Men judge of the whole ministry by the man whom they hear, and the enemies of the truth will make the most of his errors.—[Letter 61, 1896](#). Ev 210.2

Hungry for the Bread of Life—Keep your stories to yourself. The people are not soul-hungry for these, but they want the bread of life, the word that liveth and abideth forever. What is the chaff to the wheat?—[Letter 61, 1896](#). Ev 210.3

Burden of Conviction Lost by Cheap Nonsense—After a good work has been done, the ones who have been awakened to a sense of sin should be taught how to take hold of the arm of the Lord. But if the good impressions made are not followed up with true, earnest efforts, no permanent good is

accomplished. The result might be very different, did not a desire for amusement divert the mind from the contemplation of serious things.... Ev 210.4

Amusement is not to be interwoven with instruction in the Scriptures. When this is done, the hearers, amused by some cheap nonsense, lose the burden of conviction. The opportunity passes away, and no one is drawn by the cords of love to the Saviour.—[Manuscript 83, 1901](#). Ev 211.1

Free From Cheap, Common Expressions—The messages of truth are to be kept entirely free from cheap, common words of human devising. Thus forcible impressions will be made upon hearts. Let not our ministers cherish the idea that they must bring forth something new and strange, or that cheap, common expressions will give them influence. Ministers are to be the mouthpiece of God, and they must eradicate from their speech every expression that is cheap or common. Let them be careful lest by attempting during their discourse to cause laughter, they dishonor God. Ev 211.2

Our message is a solemn and sacred one, and we must watch unto prayer. The words uttered must be of such a character that through them God can make an impression on heart and mind. Let the ministers of the gospel be sanctified through the truth.—[Letter 356, 1906](#). Ev 211.3