

TTT 411. "Your Voice Matters" Tips for new and inexperienced speakers. Part 16 - Jesus Made Them Laugh. 22 April 2025

Teaching Tip 411 | "Your Voice Matters". Part 16 - Jesus Made Them Laugh. Tips for new and inexperienced speakers | Malcolm Cox

Introduction

Is there a place for laughter in sermons and Bible lessons?

Today's Tip

Today, we explore a second tip from my friend Lance Owen. I paraphrase our conversation. He suggests:

Use humour. Someone said, "I open a man's mouth with laughter so I can pour a dose of truth into it." Humour can be a very effective way of communicating important information.

If you're just starting out with speaking or teaching, you might be wondering if there's a place for a bit of a laugh in your lessons. Well, you've come to the right place! In this video and the next one, we'll explore how you can weave humour into your presentations, making them more engaging and memorable. We'll look at why it's valuable, offer some tips, consider the potential pitfalls, and even peek at how the ultimate teacher, Jesus, used humour.

Why Bother with Humour?

So, why should you even consider adding humour to your lessons? Well, when used effectively, humour can be a fantastic tool. Firstly, it can **help your audience relax and engage** right from the start. A bit of laughter can turn passive listeners into active participants, making them more open to what you have to say. The worst thing a speaker can be is boring, and humour can certainly help prevent that.

Think of it like this: a well-placed moment of levity can be like taking a breath during a long explanation. It gives your audience a chance to process information and can even help **heighten their interest**. Humour can draw people in. Plus, sharing a laugh can **make you more relatable and human** in the eyes of your audience.

Biblical Humour: Learning from the Best

Now, let's turn to the ultimate source of wisdom: the Bible. While we might not always think of it as a laugh riot, there are instances where humour, irony, and exaggeration are used to teach profound truths.

Jesus himself employed humour. Think about the **exaggerated image of "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel"**. This paints a ridiculous picture to critique misplaced priorities. His question to Nathanael, **"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"** and Jesus' witty reply, **"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"** suggests an appreciation for witty banter.

Jesus frequently used **hyperbole**, or exaggeration for effect. The idea of a **camel going through the eye of a needle** powerfully illustrates the difficulty for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God. Similarly, the image of someone worrying about a **"speck" in their brother's eye while ignoring the "beam" in their own** is a humorous and unforgettable way to highlight hypocrisy.

Even the seemingly absurd scenario of **"the blind leading the blind...both shall fall into the ditch"** uses a funny image to convey a serious warning about following misguided leaders.

A missionary told the parable of the prodigal through a translator to a group of Bedouins who had never heard it before. The missionary was bemused when they laughed. He didn't think the story was funny. The translator told him that they were laughing about the father running to the son (Luke 15.20). In those cultures, old men don't run. The tribesmen found it funny. I imagine that when Jesus taught the parable, the same thing happened, and his audience laughed or was shocked. At that point, likely Jesus paused to let the enormity of what he was saying sink in. That's what humour does.

These examples show that even in the most important teachings, there's a place for imagery and language that can evoke a smile or a moment of surprised recognition, making the lesson more impactful and memorable. Jesus' metaphors and statements introduced a "comic element" to make a point. However, it's crucial to remember that this humour always served a deeper purpose, drawing attention to profound truths.

Final Thoughts

So, as you embark on your speaking journey, don't be afraid to consider the thoughtful use of humour. Remember to be authentic, know your audience, and always ensure your humour enhances, rather than detracts from, your message. Just like the examples we see in scripture, when used with wisdom and care, humour can be a powerful way to connect with your listeners and make your lessons truly resonate.

Questions

How do you feel about using humour in your lessons? What would help you to take a step in that direction?

Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

Consider joining us at [AIM](#) UK & Ireland for faith-building teaching:

<https://aim.moodlecloud.com/>.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical?

Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: malcolm@malcolmcox.org.

If you'd like a copy of my free eBook on spiritual disciplines, "How God grows His people", sign up at my website: <http://www.malcolmcox.org>.

Please pass the link on, subscribe, and leave a review.

Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm
