

Dear friends in Christ,

As many of you know, I've spent the last twelve years of my life as a high school teacher. Most of the time, when I mention my profession to new acquaintances, I get a nice pat on the arm and the good old Texas expression: "Bless your heart!" Despite the challenges, I love my job and the lessons it has taught me. One of the most important lessons I learned during my first year of teaching had to do with clarity. I remember the first writing assignment I gave my students and being shocked at what they turned in to me. Some papers had two paragraphs, some had four, and others only had one. A few hadn't even written about the assigned topic. My first reaction was frustration, but as I began to think about it, I realized that the results I received were more my fault than theirs. I hadn't specified that I wanted 5 paragraphs, typed, double spaced. Nor had I told them that they needed an introduction paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. I learned a valuable lesson that day: my lack of *clarity* was directly linked to how well my students responded to my instructions.

Thankfully, God is much better at communicating than we are. His Word, as given to us in the Bible is understandable and clear. To be sure, there are passages that are difficult to understand, but taken as whole, the church proclaims that God's Word is for everybody and therefore intelligible to everybody. This proclamation is what the church calls the doctrine of *Perspicacity*, which is fancy word for the idea that God communicates with clarity, and that with the illumination of the Holy Spirit we can comprehend what He wants us to know about Himself. It naturally follows that an all-powerful God who desires to *reveal* Himself by *inspiring* the authors of scripture in order to give us an *infallible* text would also do so in manner that we can understand.

When talking about the Bible, I find that many people don't read it for themselves. While I've heard various excuses, several that come up frequently are that many feel intimidated or that they lack proper learning or that it's the pastor's job to explain it to them. I won't deny that having a godly pastor who is trained in reading the Bible can be helpful or even necessary at times, but we mustn't forget that at end of the day God wants to communicate to ALL of his children. In the Old Testament, God gave the Law to Moses and he read it to ALL the people of Israel, not just trained scholars. Also, Deuteronomy 6 gives special instructions to parents to teach and instruct their children in the ways of the law. I guess Moses and God think that even children can understand what God requires of them.

In the New Testament, Jesus calls the twelve disciples and entrusts them with His divine message. These men had no special qualifications or education, although several were talented fishermen, and one was a tax collector. Jesus chose to share his message with everyday Joes like you and I. And guess what, every single one of them got the message loud and clear. Sometimes it took them awhile to get what he meant, but eventually they realized that He was God in the flesh, and that He came to save all of humanity from their sin.

The witness of the Apostles to us about Jesus the Christ is equally clear. Take for example Acts 2. Peter is preaching to a crowd about the events that led to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and explaining the meaning of these events for their lives. Luke tells us in Acts 2:37-38 that the people "were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter responds, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter's preaching was so clear that the people listening knew they needed to take action, and Peter's instructions were also so clear that over 3,000 souls were added to the group of believers that day. The instructions God gives us are clear and they remain clear for us today. He

calls us to turn away from our sin, he gives us the gift of baptism to put our sin to death once and for all, and he gives us the Holy Spirit as a gift to instill new life in us that we might live forever. As we continue in our Lenten journeys, let us respond to the clear message of the gospel, which is to turn away from our sin and put our faith in the baptismal promises that God has made to each of us.

Grace and Peace,
Blaine Davis
Your Seminarian