

SIGHT AND SOUND

Matt 6:26-30

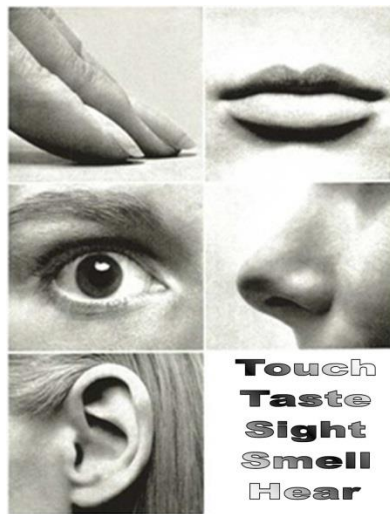
26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

(Check out the underlined statements of our Savior above. Don't you think He may have pointed to the objects or perhaps even held them in his hand as He preached this message?)

God created a fantastic universe and then made us humans capable of experiencing that creation through the 5 senses of the brain: **sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell.**



The Creator then used these to communicate with us and showed by example how to most effectively use them with great illustrations. For example:

1. He showed up personally to **walk and talk** with Adam in the Garden.
2. He gave Adam the ability to **name the animals** and to **communicate** with Eve.
3. In Eden there were no doubt **wonderful fragrances** for Adam to inhale and opportunities to use his sense of **touch** - which no doubt added to his pleasure when Eve was created.

4. He enabled man to **taste** of the fruit and vegetables of Eden and to **work** with them.
5. Later he even added the ability to **savor the flavor** of a good steak (after the flood).
6. In Noah's Day he gave the entire world **a visual display** of catastrophe – the **Flood**.
7. On Sinai He, with a great display of **fire, lightning, thunder and darkness** chiseled the **10 commandments** on tablets of stone.
8. Throughout history He gave the **spoken and written Word** to mankind.
9. Every **animal sacrifice** was a **visual, audible, fragrant, mental and tactile** experience.
10. When Jesus taught and preached he often used visual objects such as the **birds** of the air, the **lilies** of the field, and fantastic **visual and verbal miracles**.
11. Paul used such visual aids as **the idol to the unknown god** of the Greeks to preach, etc., etc.

Since we remember more of what we hear when aided by visuals, and other stimulants in a learning experience, it seems logical to use as many and varied things available to us as possible. Of course **it takes more thought and preparation** to conjure up ideas to make our messages come alive. It **takes time** to prepare a Powerpoint slide presentation than to just write or type some notes. (*Lazy teachers and preachers need not apply!*)

We encourage our Sunday School teachers to use helps with children by using **flannel boards, cutouts, paste-ups, taste experiences, coloring sheets, crafts and objects**, but when our students get older we seem to forget about the effectiveness of class participation and the use of the 5 senses of the brain to communicate truth. Then when we get into the preaching auditorium we usually lock ourselves in to only one method: speaking. Of course it is true that we often paint verbal pictures so the listeners can use their imaginations but it is also true that many of them simply use the "off switch" in their brains and are thinking of many of the mundane things in their lives, like paying bills, their jobs, etc. while we drone on without using things which will engage their brains and lock in their attention to our lesson or sermon.

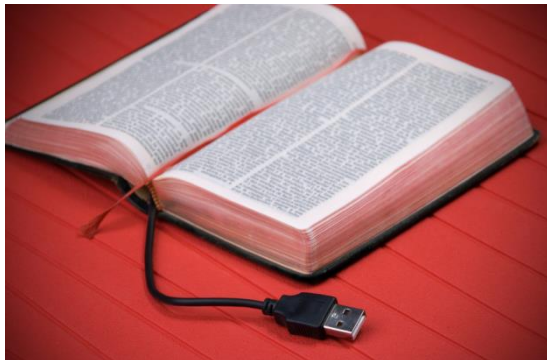
But some of the most memorable sermons I, and hopefully you, have heard were enhanced with some sort of visual plus audible experience which embedded the truth of a message in your memory.

ILLUS.: At the Solid Rock Northeast Summit Pastor Doug Fisher had young men obey his commands by carrying him around on the platform. Recently, one local preacher preached a message about being fishers of men using a fishing rod and casting it into the congregation. I have used a man wrapped in a shroud to illustrate Lazarus' resurrection. I witnessed Paul Chappell have someone carried around the platform to illustrate a Bible truth and another preacher had wood yokes placed on a man's shoulders with various weights added to the buckets under the yokes to show how man-made burdens are heavy and Jesus' "burden" is light. A man in my church used a child's rocking horse to tell the story of the Good Samaritan taking care of the wounded man's needs. Another preacher used a small bush wrapped in foil and soaked in lighter fluid to illustrate Moses' burning bush experience.

In our area there is a place called **SIGHT AND SOUND** that turns Bible stories into an experience that makes the Bible come alive. They are a multi-million dollar industry that not only reaches Christians, but the unsaved as well. We may criticize them and their tragic waste of opportunity to give strong invitations at the end of their presentations, their portrayal of a long-haired, effeminate Jesus, etc., but they illustrate what can be done with visual, audible, aromatic, and tactile experiences to present Bible truths. No one is suggesting that you

turn your services into performances, but I am suggesting that we need to break out of the staid, stale, often listless presentation of God's wonderful Word.

Preacher, teacher...you may only get one opportunity to embed a truth into the brains and lives of the people you minister to in order to change their lives. You need to do so using every means at your disposal. Use YOUR brain to reach others brains! **THINK! PLAN! WORK!** - as if this was the one and only opportunity you have to impress those who come to hear you. In fact, one reason Bible believing churches are losing members to the contemporary churches is because we limit our ability to effectively communicate and people grow weary of the "same ole – same ole" week after week and year after year. Whether you like it or not the contemporary churches are engaging their followers by using technology to enhance the experience. The question is why aren't we doing all we can to **engage, enlist, excite and encourage** our people with the message God has given us, using every means at our disposal? This week **THINK** about the messages and lessons you will present to your people and **PLAN** to make them memorable! Don't allow yourself to stay in a rut and present wonderful truth in boring way. Make every sermon something the hearers will respond to and talk about that week. Make every lesson you teach grab their attention using every means at your disposal. You may not have to search beyond your kitchen, your garage, your workshop, your office, your computer or your neighborhood to find just that right object or visual to grab your hearer's attention and affect their lives for Christ. **Isn't that our (your) job?!** Don't just use **SOUND**, use **SIGHT** (and smell, taste, and feeling) as well. It can change your ministry from a stagnant, boring, humdrum experience to something exciting and life changing. It may even save your ministry from extinction and your people from shopping around for something that will engage them, excite them and change them!



Billy Sunday using a visual while preaching