

1
Sage Voice

Introduction: A Conference with Solomon

And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol, and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom. (1 Kings 4:29-34)

Imagine a preacher giving application: (Proverbs 6:6-8)

1. Sage Sermon Preparation

A. Preparation: Proverbs 24:30-34 (from the vantage point of the fear of the Lord over all of life

I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense.	<i>The wise notice a snapshot of ordinary life. (Watching a field is no waste of time.)</i>
and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.	<i>The wise describes the scene. (Close attention to bits of the mundane is a worthy labor.)</i>
Then, I saw it and considered it; I looked and received instruction.	<i>The wise meditate on what they observe and can describe. (Thinking more than once about a mundane thing is wise. Fields have something to teach preachers and sermon listeners.)</i>
A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.	<i>The wise communicate with poetic metaphor, exposing with a proverb the fruit of our thoughts, feelings, and actions in ordinary life. (Poetic language is not unbiblical. Word pictures from life can express the truth of the matter.)</i>

Not just folly, calling out in the marketplaces of culture. Wisdom calls out "in the street ... in the markets ... at the entrance of the city gates" (Prov 1:20-21). "On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads ... beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud" (Prov 8:2-3).

We are meant to meditate on the audio of the place.

2. Sage Delivery of Sermons:

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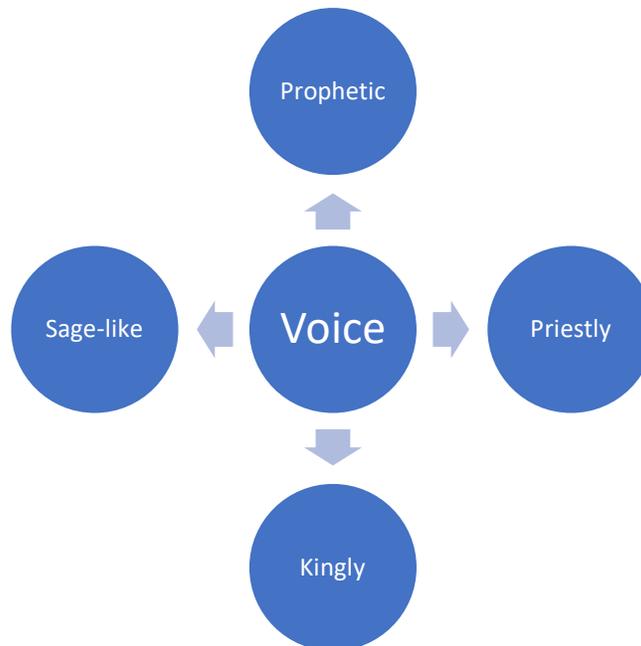
“We recall the saying of Jeremiah: ‘The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet’ (Jer. 18:18). We find these all—all these styles—in Christ.”¹

Therefore, I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, (Matt. 23:34)

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Col. 1:28)

Therefore, that faith may find in Christ a solid ground of salvation, and so rest in him, we must set out with this principle, that the office which he received from the Father consists of three parts. For he was appointed both Prophet, King, and Priest.²

Three Wheels on a Car; The Hub/Rim for Each Wheel



Prophet	Priest	Sage
Isaiah 5:22–24 [22] Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, [23] who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! [24] Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and	Leviticus 10:9–11 [9] “Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. Deuteronomy 14:24–26 [24] And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry	Proverbs 23:29–35 [29] Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? [30] Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. [31] Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. [32] In

¹ Amos N. Wilder, *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 86.

² John Calvin, *Calvin’s Institutes*, chapter 15,

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<p>their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. (ESV)</p>	<p>the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there, [25] then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the LORD your God chooses [26] and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. (ESV)</p>	<p>the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. [33] Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things. [34] You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. [35] “They struck me,” you will say, “but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink.” (ESV)</p>
<p>Direct Speech: Passionate, Urgent Exhortation to Repent. Immediate appeal to our will.</p>	<p>Direct Speech: Calm Doctrinal Instruction, reminder of Israel’s story, mediation with sin, for Situational Application. Appeal to intellect, as one knee deep in worship and sacrifice, what to believe and do.</p>	<p>Indirect Speech: question, metaphor, real-world “sound-bites”, to prompt reflection toward change. Reasoning by appeal to imagination/concrete experience and feeling</p>
<p>Jesus: Woe to You!</p>	<p>Jesus: Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. When you pray . . . When you fast . . . When you are anxious . . .</p>	<p>Jesus: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.”</p>
<p>Paul: Galatians 1:6–9; 3:1-3 [6] I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—[7] not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. [9] As we have said</p>	<p>Paul: Ephesians 4:25–32 [25] Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. [26] Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and give no opportunity to the devil. [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with</p>	<p>Paul: 2 Timothy 2:3–7 [3] Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. [4] No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. [5] An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. [6] It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. [7] Think over what I say,</p>

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<p>before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed . . .</p> <p>[1] O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. [2] Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? [3] Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?</p>	<p>anyone in need. [29] Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. [32] Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (ESV)</p>	<p>for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. (ESV)</p>
<p>Key Texts: So I opened my mouth, and he gave me this scroll to eat. And he said to me, “Son of man, feed your belly with this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.” Then I ate it, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey. And he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel— Like emery harder than flint have I made your forehead. Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.” Moreover, he said to me, “Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears. And go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.” (Ezekiel 3:1-11)</p>	<p>Key Text: For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. (Ezra 7:10) And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” (Matt. 13:52)</p>	<p>Key text: ⁹ Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. ¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. ¹² My son, beware of anything beyond these. (Eccl. 12:1-12)</p>

Jesus and the Gospels

If you were to read the book of Matthew for the first time . . .

Sermon on the Mount ⇒ Parables ⇒ Prophetic Mantle ⇒ Silence
(priestly, sage-like) (priestly, sage-like) (Prophet)

3. Sage Recognition of Audience

- Naïve Hearers
- Foolish Hearers
- Scoffing Hearers

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- Wounded Hearers

4. Sage Boldness: Indirect Speech

What is Indirect Speech?

Indirect speech, of the kind we have in mind, often relies on poetic tools such as metaphor or parable, simile or riddle, question or allegory.

How Do We Use Indirect Speech?

Notice that God teaches us about a hypocritical moment. Poetic Direct Speech (Matt. 7:3-5)

Indirect speech tells us Peter's story.

(Jn. 18:17-18)

[Jesus questioned and struck by the High Priest, Jn. 18:19-24]

(Jn. 18:25-27)

Notice that John, doesn't step in as a narrator now and remind us about what Jesus had earlier said about roosters crowing or give us sentences to explain to make sure we understand . . .

Indirect speech invites someone to look out the window before looking in the mirror.

(window/telescope)

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

(mirror/stethoscope)

And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:27-29)

Look again at Nathan's speech to King David.

(window/telescope)

And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor . . . Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man . . .

(mirror/stethoscope)

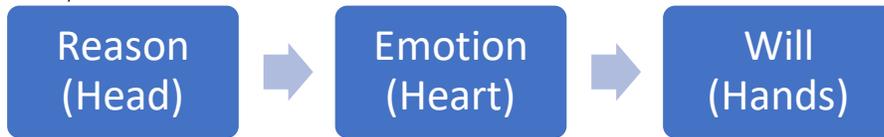
Nathan said to David, "You are the man! (2 Samuel 12:1-7)

4. A Timely Cultural Moment

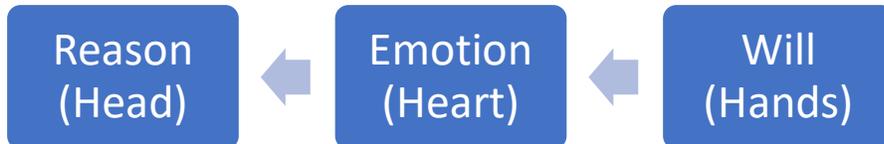
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Challenge #1 Cultural Ways of Approaching Truth

1) Modern: Deductive

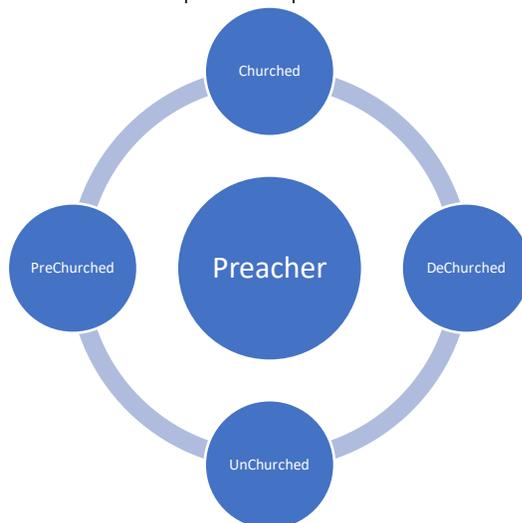


2) Post-Modern (Pre-Modern): Inductive



Challenge #2: Contested Assumptions (Language and Pace)³

As Evangelicals, when we speak of Christianity we cannot assume that our hearers understand the faith as anything other than another personal preference in an ocean of cultural preferences.⁴



³ Keller reminds us of the “long process of conversion” and the necessity of “pre-evangelism” and “apologetics” in our communication.³ “Five Thresh-holds” (1) From distrust to trust (2) From complacent to curious (3) From being closed to change to being open to change (4) From meandering to seeking (5) From outside the kingdom to the kingdom³

⁴ Noble, Alan. *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age* (p. 2). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.