

## Jesus, the Quintessential Communicator

A sermon preached at Niles Discovery Church, Fremont, California,  
on Sunday, August 17, 2025, by Beth "Bee" Newell.

Scriptures: [Genesis 6:11-22](#) and various quotes from Mr. Fred Rogers

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According to Meriam-Webster's online dictionary, "Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

Early scribes likely believed their documents would be clear to future generations, but messages and information can be misunderstood or misinterpreted in many ways.



This somewhat humorous picture indicates that perhaps all communication is just an illusion – a misperception.

How many of you know what this is? Just checking to see how good your history teachers have been. This Enigma cipher machine was a direct attempt to confuse communication, and it worked from pre-World War II into the early parts of the war.

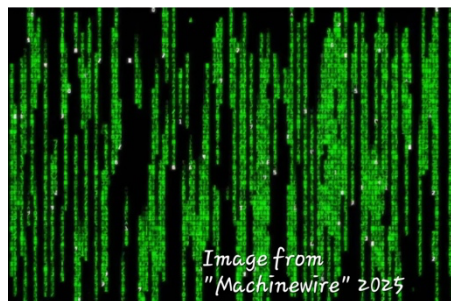


Image from  
"Machinewire" 2025

Do you know what this is? I am evaluating whether I remain sufficiently connected to younger individuals. This Matrix code was incomprehensible to the film's protagonist until he ultimately succeeded in understanding how to use it for his benefit. He never did "crack it."



The Bible is a book about communication, so I'm going to start with God, which seems to me a very good place to begin any sermon/message in church.

From the Hebrew Scriptures, aka the Old Testament book of Genesis, we read that "in the beginning," there was God, and God was able to speak light into being, to direct the earth and all the stars into existence. God **commanded**, which is pretty much a one-way "speak." God did not have to be an excellent interpersonal communicator because He was

able to give orders, and they were either carried out or there were consequences—sometimes drastic consequences. Think about Jonah or Lot's wife. There are several other examples in the Hebrew Bible of God giving direct commands. One is our first reading today.

God instructed Noah to build an ark, providing detailed specifications for its construction and contents. In the humorous 1965 Cosby skit, Noah questions God's instructions, leading God to ask, "Noah, how long can you tread water?"

There are four important aspects of Communication: Body Language, Content Statements, Expressing Feelings, and Covert Messages. Jesus exemplified effective communication through personal conversations, group teachings, and by using questions and parables to engage others and clarify his messages.

First, Jesus was undoubtedly very charismatic. Some people are seen as better communicators simply because they have charisma, defined here as "infectious energy" or "a quality of compelling attractiveness." I say Jesus must have been charismatic because it is written in the Gospels of both Matthew and John that Andrew, his brother Simon Peter, James, and his brother John, once called by Jesus, left their fishing duties and followed Jesus fairly immediately. It must have been a very bad day for fishermen but a good day for fish.

One aspect of communication that is very important is body language, including head height, distance away from the listener, the way the limbs, especially the arms are held by the speaker, and the tone of voice. I wanted to demonstrate this for you by walking around the room, sitting down in front and positioning myself in different parts of the room while still talking, but that was impossible, so here are some pictures to demonstrate.

In this picture of Jesus walking on the water, we see a second figure, Peter. Peter said if you really are the Lord, call to me and let **me** walk on water. Note that the figure of Jesus is larger than life and positioned standing much taller than Peter.

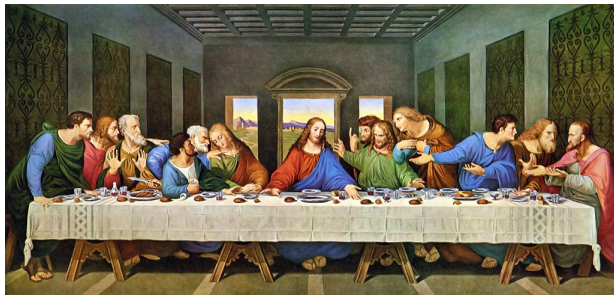


When Jesus wanted to deliver important messages to large groups of people, he got up higher to do so. Undoubtedly partly because he had to do so to be seen, but also to give himself the advantage of possessing authority. This authority advantage occurs without the listeners even being aware of it. Notice how this artist uses this idea in a depiction of the Sermon on the Mount.





But when (as we might say today) Jesus was chatting or even calmly instructing his disciples/friends, he placed himself more equally with them.



The Bible also emphasizes the importance of choosing words carefully to maintain harmony and promote understanding. Proverbs 15:1 states, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger," highlighting the power of words in relationships. How many have you heard this proverb when you were growing up? It was one of my mother's favorites. Jesus demonstrated this in several recorded examples; even as he avoided direct answers by responding with questions or metaphors, he chose his words (the content) carefully. When asked about paying taxes to Rome, Jesus replied, as recorded in three of the four gospels: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Proverbs 18:21 reminds us that "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." This verse highlights the profound impact of words and the responsibility that comes with using them wisely.

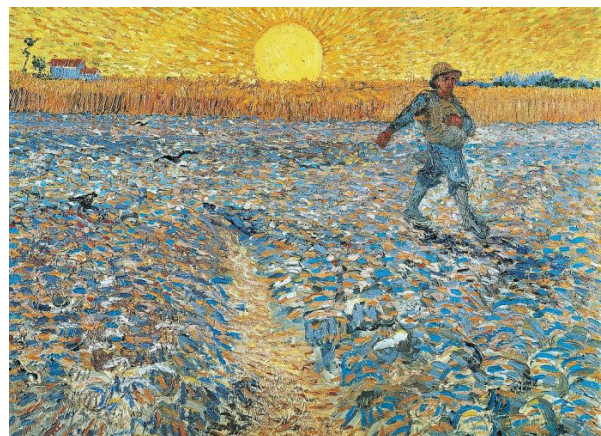


Jesus expressed his emotions openly. When communicating, aim to match your words with your feelings—it's fine to say, "I'm angry" or "I'm frustrated and "I love you," but have your body language match those expressions. Do know, however, that you can't be certain the listener feels that feeling in the same way that you feel it, so saying, "I know exactly how you feel," can come across as very rude because you don't!

Stories with hidden messages can encourage audiences to consider multiple lessons and the broader meaning of words, but they can easily be misunderstood. Jesus' use of parables, for example, offers varied experiences and interpretations upon each reading. The Bible is the most widely read and reread book in the world.

I conclude with a poem attributed to Mr. Rogers shortly before he died in 2003

"There are three ways to  
ultimate success:



The first way is to be kind.  
The second way is to be kind.  
The third way is to be kind.”

Amen.