

## Discovery – “Do I Make Myself Clear?”

Description: Former newspaper editor, writer and broadcaster, Sir Harold Evans, challenges pastors and Christian communicators to examine our work: Do I make myself clear? Writing short devotions is a discipline that sharpens the theological insight and diction of the writer and brings contemporary relevance of age-old biblical truths to readers and hearers. If you can’t say it clearly and quickly, you probably don’t get it. Your reader or hearer certainly won’t!

### I

A. Five parts of rhetoric:

Discovery  
Disposition  
Diction  
Memory  
Delivery

Discovery: The Greeks called it *heurisis*, *finding*, and the Romans called it *inventio*, from *in-venio*, *come upon*. Discovery is the “aha!” moment when you know something you’ve come across will preach.

Sources of Discovery:

- Reading non-theological fiction and non-fiction
- Overhearing people’s conversations
- Top of the mind awareness (TOMA). What’s in the news? What are people talking about?
- What’s in it for me? (WIIFM?). This is not necessarily selfish, although it can be. People legitimately ask if something is to their benefit.
- Your own gut feelings.

For example, here’s a discovery moment about the Ninth and Tenth Commandments that came from reading the Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel.

In a moment of eternity, while the taste of redemption was still fresh to the former slaves, the people of Israel were given Ten Words, the Ten Commandments. In the beginning and end, the Decalogue deals with the liberty of man. The first Word—*I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*—reminds him that his outer liberty was given to him by God, and the tenth Word—*Thou shalt not covet!*—reminds him that he himself must achieve his inner liberty.

When today we wish to bring a word into special prominence we either underline it or print it in italics. In ancient literature, emphasis is expressed through direct repetition (epizeuxis), by repeating a word without any intervening words. The Bible, for example, says: “Justice, Justice

shalt thou follow” (Deuteronomy 16:20); “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people” (Isaiah 40:1). Of all the Ten Commandments, only one is proclaimed twice, the last one: “Thou shalt not covet...Thou shalt not covet.” Clearly it was reiterated in order to stress its extraordinary importance. Man is told not to covet “thy neighbor’s house,” “thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing belonging to thy neighbor.

We know that passion cannot be vanquished by decree.... – Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 89-90

**B.** When you’ve discovered something that you can use for presenting a text or theme, the next question is, “How will I make myself clear?”

Writers generally set out with good intentions, but something happens along the way. We don’t really know what we want to say until we try to write it, and in the gap between the thought and its expression we realize the bold idea has to be qualified or elaborated. We write more sentences. Then more. We are soon in the territory defined by the French mathematician Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) but associated with others, too: I would have written something shorter, but I didn’t have time. Soon enough we find ourselves trapped in a bad neighborhood. We whistle up reinforcements, more words. Thoughts collide midsentence. Abstractions suffocate narrative. Nouns dressed up as verbs sap vigor. Clichés avoid detection. Stale images creep in. Modifiers get detached from the words they are supposed to modify: “Walking into Trafalgar Square, Admiral Nelson’s column is surrounded by pigeons reaching 169 feet into a pure blue sky.”

Writing is like thinking. It’s hard. (17-18)

**C.** Putting your discovery into a short piece or sermon almost always takes revision, revision, revision. Am I clear in my point? Is my logic tight? Have I warded off criticism because my writing wasn’t disciplined? Is there something in my short piece, a line, a twist, a quotation, something that makes it memorable?

Nota Bene: You can’t cop out of the hard discipline of writing by appealing to the “efficacy of the Word.”

For example, consider the following Minute. How do we explain natural disasters? Punt to Romans 8:20-23? True, but does that get to the heart of someone sitting in a comfortable pew? Parishioners generally guess where we’re going with a topic. This Minute attempts to evoke primal fear, which is necessary if there is to be true biblical fear of God.

### ***The Meyer Minute for September 3, 2019***

Our church in Collinsville has a stained glass window behind the pulpit. Because it’s in that prominent place, we look at it throughout the church service, sometimes thinking about the image, other times taking it for granted. The window shows a woman hanging onto the cross for dear life, surging sea waves at her feet.

Hurricane Dorian is terrorizing the Bahamas and the south-eastern coast of the United States. Winds of 185 miles an hour killed five people in the Bahamas, destroyed 13,000 homes, many not covered by

insurance. Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said, “Devastation is unprecedented and extensive.” Today Dorian menaces the American coast. Is Dorian what insurance carriers call “an act of God”?

August 24<sup>th</sup> was the anniversary of another “act of God,” the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed and buried Pompeii. A young man named Pliny watched from a distance. Years later he wrote, “You could hear women shrieking, children screaming, men shouting. (Some) raised their hands to the gods, but most of them thought there were no gods at all.”

Are we church-goers naïve to sing, “How Great Thou Art”? “O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder / Consider all the works Thy hand hath made, / I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, / Thy pow’r throughout the universe displayed; / Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee, / How great Thou art! How great Thou art! / Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee, / How great Thou art! How great Thou art!” What we see in Dorian and other natural disasters is the other side of the coin, the terrors of the Creator’s world.

What Pliny says, and what I sense as I watch the news reports about Dorian, is that people aren’t theologizing about whether these natural tragedies are acts of God. What does it matter when you’re scared for your life? Besides, we cannot peer into the hidden things of God. People afraid for their lives have no hope but for God to save them. That’s true for people in the path of Dorian or Vesuvius; it’s also true for you and me when something overwhelming and fearful comes at us. And so I think of that window and don’t take it for granted. The woman amidst the storms of life hangs onto Jesus’ cross for dear life.

## II

After Discovery comes **Disposition (Outline) and Diction (your selection of words)**.

- A. Ten Shortcuts to Making Yourself Clearer (Harold Evans, *Do I Make Myself Clear?* 80-139)
1. Get Moving
  2. Be Specific
  3. Ration Adjectives, Raze Adverbs
  4. Cut the Fat, Check the Figures
  5. Organize for Clarity
  6. Be Positive
  7. Don’t Be a Bore
  8. Put People First
  9. The Pesky Prepositions
  10. Down with Monologophobia
- B. The difference between Oral and Literary Style. See the short piece by BBC broadcaster John Hilton. A sermon is oral. If a short devotion is broadcast, it’s oral. If read, somewhat literary, but not too much so.
- C. Benefits of writing short devotions (short meaning you’ve imposed a word count upon yourself):
- Spiritual journaling
  - Sharpen focus on your topic. Don’t be a goldfish!

- Discipline of tight writing. Does pulling a sentence or paragraph out hurt the piece?
- Shake church jargon. Don't assume they understand it. Teach what the shorthand means.
- Helpful for ministry in highly segmented communication age. A sermon isn't enough.
- Germ for a sermon. Most of my Minutes could be expanded into sermons.
- Response (e.g. likes on Facebook) suggest how it might be received in a sermon.

### III

Lab time: Upcoming Gospels

A. Lectionary lures...

1. Snippets, which is what pericope means, lead us to disregard context (literary and historical).
2. In our busyness, we easily go to OT and Epistle for contextual material.
3. Familiar stories invited standard treatments. Recall our revision of Evans' paragraph.
4. Result: Scriptural teaching that is not textual.

B. Upcoming Lukan pericopes set in their larger literary context, 13:22-19:44

**Colored Pencils: Green for faith statements. Red for Law statements.**

## The Found and the Foil

**“Nothing in my hands I bring” v. Pharisees then and now**

**“All the more are human works mortal sins when they are done without fear and in unadulterated, evil self-security” (Heidelberg Disputation 8).**

**“That person is not righteous who works much, but who without work believes much in Christ.” “The law says, ‘Do this,’ and it is never done. Grace says, ‘Believe in this One,’ and everything has already been done.” (Heidelberg Disputation, 25, 26)**

**Overarching Truth: The Narrow Door. “‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’” (13:25-26). “Some are last who will be first (faith) and some are first who will be last” (Pharisees; 13:30).**

**Jesus teaches His disciples the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Journeying toward Jerusalem. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” (13:34)**

Sabbath controversy: **“It is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not? But they remained silent” (14:3-4).**

Parable of Wedding Feast. Take lower seat. **“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (14:11)**

September 8, 2019      Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Series C Proper 18

Luke 14:25-35, *The Cost of Discipleship*

**“Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple”** 14:33.

September 15, 2019 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Series C Proper 19

Luke 15:1-10, *Lost Sheep; Lost Coin*)

**“Ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance”** (15:7). **“Joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents”** (15:10)

Prodigal Son *Who is the elder brother?*

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## September 22, 2019 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Series C, Proper 20

Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-15

Luke 16:1-15, *The Dishonest Manager*

What might regular church-goers be expecting to hear? Stewardship same-ol’ same ol’?

Where does the Word of Jesus confront us committed church-goers?

Pharisee: “I give tithes of all that I possess” (Luke 18:12)

“The works of the righteous would be mortal sins were they not feared as mortal sins by the righteous themselves out of pious fear of God” (Heidelberg Disputation 7). Be sure to explain “mortal sin”!

“No creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:12).

“At His coming all people will rise again with their bodies and give an account concerning their own deeds. And those who have done good will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith; whoever does not believe it faithfully and firmly cannot be saved” (Athanasian Creed).

All of which is to say, **direct the people to the future. Does God judge sinners according to their works? Will you be saved by good works?**

“It is certain that one must utterly despair of oneself in order to be made fit to receive the grace of Christ.” (Heidelberg Disputation 18)

Incongruous grace (John Barclay, *Paul & the Gift*)

“God, not on account of our own merits but on account of Christ, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace on account of Christ” (Augustana V).

“If someone cuts with a rusty and rough hatchet, even though the worker is a good craftsman, the hatch leaves bad, jagged, and ugly gashes. So it is when God works through us” (Heidelberg Disputation 6).

What do you want to make clear?

How will you make it clear?

Title? *What Can You Give for Your Life?*

*Religious Hatchet Job*

Outline?

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16:16-17 is omitted in the lectionary. “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of god is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.”

16:18 is also omitted. Divorce and Remarriage

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## **September 29, 2019      Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Series C Proper 21

Amos 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13 or 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Luke 16:19-31, *The Rich Man and Poor Lazarus*

or St. Michael and All Angels. Note: “The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side” (16:22).

What might regular church-goers be expecting to hear? Wealth is dangerous. Wait for the sweet bye-and-bye. Fluffy angels.

Where does the Word of Jesus confront our normal church-going ways?

The honor society gives to the conspicuous rich; the shame of others. Our complicity with the world’s honor/shame values is our guilt.

“Let’s start with shame and guilt, because these are the two that we most often confuse, and the consequence of doing that is severe. The majority of shame researchers and clinicians agree that the difference between shame and guilt is best understood as the difference between ‘I am bad’ and ‘I did something bad.’

**“Guilt = I did something bad.**

**“Shame = I am bad.** (Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead*, 128)

“The honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’ and ‘a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.’ They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race....” (1 Peter 2:7-9).

Greek tragedies “show the way in which we collude, seemingly unknowingly, with calamities that befall us” (Simon Critchley, *Tragedy, the Greeks, and Us*, 12).

There’s tragedy from this parable: Following our culture’s honor/shame is our guilt for which we should repent or perish forever. “There but for the grace of God go I.” Faith given by the Word of the resurrected Christ changes our value system. Note Matthew 28:17.

What do you want to make clear?

How will you make it clear?

Title? *Shame on Whom?*

Outline?

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Jesus shifts His main emphasis to **those who have left everything, their own lives included, for Him (Faith)**

## **October 6, 2019    Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Series C Proper 22

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Luke 17:1-10, *Temptations to Sin; “Increase our Faith”*

What might regular church-goers be expecting to hear? Saved by grace through faith. *I have faith; here I am at church. I know Jesus died for the whole world.*

Where does the Word of Jesus confront our normal church-going ways?

Whom have you hurt?

Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and are falling short of the glory of God.” Note present tense.

**What’s different about your church?** “The gift of God in Christ is articulated as an unconditioned gift in its creation of a community that neither mirrors nor endorses the regnant systems of value.” “Paul makes clear that the truth of the good news is entirely lost if it is not enacted in creative social relations that are apt to challenge central features of their cultural environment. The relationship between “theology” and “social practice” is thus mutually constitutive: it is the Christ-event that gives meaning and shape to communal practice, while it is in social practice that the nature of the Christ-event is, or is not, realized” (Barclay, 439)

“The ultimate soul-forming institutions in a free society are frequently religious institutions. Traditional religion offers a direct challenge to the ethic of the age of fracture. Religious commitments command us to a mixture of responsibility, sympathy, lawfulness, and righteousness that align our wants with our duties. They help form us to be free.” (Luval Levin, *The Fractured Republic*, 204)

“Having spent time around ‘sinners’ and also around purported saints, I have a hunch why Jesus spent so much time with the former group: I think he preferred their company. Because the sinners were honest about themselves and had no pretense, Jesus

could deal with them. In contrast, the saints put on airs, judged him, and sought to catch him in a moral trap. In the end it was the saints, not the sinners, who arrested Jesus” (Philip Yancey, *What’s So Amazing about Grace?* In *unChristian*, David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, 60.

What do you want to make clear?  
How will you make it clear?  
Title? *Why is Our Church Different?*  
Outline?

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## **October 13, 2019 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Series C Proper 23

Ruth 1:1-19a; 2 Timothy 2:1-13

Luke 17:11-19, *Ten Lepers*

What might regular church-goers be expecting to hear? Be thankful! But what’s Christian about that?

Where does the Word of Jesus confront our normal church-going ways?

Shame and honor. Note that forgiveness of sins is not in play.

“God’s love does not find, but creates, that which is pleasing to it. Human love comes into being through that which is pleasing to it.” “This is the love of the cross, born of the cross, which turns in the direction where it does not find good, which it may enjoy, but where it may confer good upon the evil and needy person” (Heidelberg Disputation 28).

“The whole Christian church on earth” (Third Article)

Jesus tells the cleansed lepers to witness to the priests. “Priesthood of all believers.” How do laity witness to the pastor?

What can we church-goers, sometimes cocooned in our comfortable church, learn from global south Christians?

What do you want to make clear?  
How will you make it clear?  
Title? *What Kind of Love Is This?*  
Outline?

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Note in lectionary C: The Coming of the Kingdom. **“Remember Lot’s wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it”** (17:32)

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## October 20, 2019 Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Series C, Proper 24

Genesis 32:22-30; 2 Timothy 3:14-15

Luke 18:1-8, *The Persistent (Devoted) Widow*

What might your church-goers be expecting? Pray! Same ol' same ol'

Where does the Word of Christ confront us?

“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, **believe that you have received it**, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). You can only explain that eschatologically. September 22<sup>nd</sup> we looked fearfully toward the coming judgment. Today’s text tells us to look forward expectantly. Justice will come.

“Call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks” (Second Commandment)

What do you want to make clear?

How will you make it clear?

Title? *Is Justice Deferred Justice Denied*”

Outline?

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## October 27, 2019 Reformation Day (observed)

But what are the people really hearing when the standard Reformation propers are used? How can I make this clear? Consider the Gospel for...

### The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Series C, Proper 25

Genesis 4:1-15; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Luke 18:9-17, *The Pharisee and the Publican*

What will church-goers expect on Reformation Sunday? Lutheran triumphalism!

Where does the Word of Christ confront them? Here’s where a different Gospel or the ordinary Gospel for the 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday can help.

Mark 7:20-23. This is not shame. This is being ashamed for your guilt.

Again, Romans 3:23; Hebrews 4:13.

“One extreme thing must be said. To forego self-conceit and to associate with the lowly means, in all soberness and without mincing the matter, to consider oneself the greatest of sinners. This arouses all the resistance of the natural man, but also that of the self-confident Christian. It sounds like an exaggeration, like an untruth. Yet even Paul said of himself that he was the foremost of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15); he said this specifically at the point where he was speaking of his service as an apostle. There can be no genuine acknowledgement of sin that does not lead to this extremity.

If my sinfulness appear to me to be in any way smaller or less detestable in comparison with the sins of others, I am still not recognizing my sinfulness at all. My sin is of necessity the worst, the most grievous, the most reprehensible. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 96)

Sooner or later, God strips everything away from us.

Explanation to Second Article

What do you want to make clear?

How will you make this clear?

Title? *Who's Chief of Sinners?* (You are; Jesus is)

Outline?

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Not in lectionary C here, Luke 18:15-17: **Faith is Christ-centered: "Let the children come to Me"**

The Rich Ruler, Luke 18:8-30. **"How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"** "Then who can be saved?" (18:24, 26). *Remember that the Pharisees loved money.*

**"Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life"** (18:29-30).

Third Passion Prediction, Luke 18:31-34

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar, Luke 18:35-43. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more...." (18:38-39). **"Your faith has made you well"** (18:42).

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**All Saints Sunday**, but consider

**November 3, 2019            The Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost**

Series C, Proper C

Isaiah 1:10-18; 2 Thessalonian 1:1-5 [6-10] 11-12

Jesus and Zacchaeus. **"They all grumbled. 'He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner'"** (19:7). **"The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost"** (19:10).

*Grumbling about Us Saints.*      Zacchaeus was shamed by his own people.

*Finis for now!*

## BROADCASTER JOHN HILTON TALKS ABOUT TALKING

*"To read as if you were talking you must first write as if you were talking. What you have on the paper in front of you must be talk stuff, not book stuff."*

JOHN HILTON, A BBC BROADCASTER in London before World War II, proved a popular announcer with the radio audience. Instead of reading the prepared text in monotones, Hilton enlivened his words with what he called "calculated spontaneity"—the ability to make reading sound like conversational speaking.

Hilton discussed this ability when he ended a lengthy series of broadcasts with the following lecture on the topic of talking. Hilton's focus in this broadcast, delivered on the BBC on July 1, 1937, is the art of public address, particularly the tricks that allow speakers to sound as if they were thinking out loud. With colloquial expressions ("I must buckle to") and deliberate interjections ("Well, there you are"), he uses an informal tone designed to keep listeners interested. Through the internal dialogue—a conversational device of asking questions and then offering the answers himself—Hilton is able to achieve "calculated spontaneity."

□ □ □

I kept wondering what to say to you in this last talk, and then I had a bright idea. At least I *hope* it's a bright idea. I said to myself, "Suppose you give a talk about giving a talk."—"A talk about giving a talk! How d'you mean?"—"Why, how you set about it, and the tricks of the trade, and so on."—"Yes, that is rather an idea," I said to myself. So here goes. . . .

There've been bits in the paper sometimes about my broadcasts. The bits I've always liked best are those that refer to John Hilton "who just comes to the microphone and *talks*. So different from listening to something being *read*." Oh yes, I like that. For, of course, I read every word of every talk. If only I could pull it off every time—but you have to be at the top of your form. Yes, of course, every word's on paper even now—this—what

I'm saying to you now—it's all here. Talking! Just as it comes to him! Right out of his head! I hope it sounds so; it's meant to. If it does—well—this is one of my good days.

"Tricks of the trade." Must I really tell you those? All right. The first trick of the trade is that there aren't any tricks. I mean tricks don't come off. That's my experience, anyway. I've tried, in my time, this way and that. I like experiments. I'll try anything once. But the little stunts and try-ons—no good! For me, I mean, of course. I think what listeners can spot more surely than anything else is any trace of falseness. I think you've got to find yourself—the radio rendering of yourself, and then be true to it. Truth, not tricks. For my sort of stuff, I mean, of course.

"But to read as if you were talking! Isn't that a trick?" Oh no, that's an art—or a craft, whichever you like. And in every art or craft there's a technique, a method, a way. What is it here? Well, I suppose each has to find his own; but my notion is that to read as if you were talking you must first write as if you were talking. What you have on the paper in front of you must be talk stuff, not book stuff.

It's, in part, a mere matter of how you put the words down on the paper. That very sentence now, the one you've just heard. It began with "It's in part. . . ." If I'd said to you, "It is, in part," you'd have thought, "He's reading." In speech we say "It's," not "It is." So I write "IT apostrophe S," and not "It is" on the paper. I know if I wrote "It is," I should say "It is." . . .

I don't know anything about others, as I say, but my way is to speak my sentences aloud as I write them. In fact, here's my second rule, all pat: "To write as you would talk you must talk while you write." If you were outside my room while I'm writing a talk you'd hear muttering and mumbling and outright declaration from beginning to end. You'd say, "There's somebody in there with a slate loose; he never stops talking to himself." No, I wouldn't be talking to *myself* but to you. . . .

You can scrap, in writing a talk, most of what you've been told all your life was literary good form. You have to; if you want your talk to ring the bell and walk in and sit down by the hearth. You've been told, for instance, that it's bad form to end a sentence with a preposition. It may be, in print. But not in talk. Not in talk. I'm coming to the view that what I call the "prepositional verb" (I'm no grammarian—I invent my own names for those things)—that what I call the prepositional verb is one of the glories of the English language. You start with a simple verb like "to stand"; and with the help of a pocketful of prepositions you get all those lovely changes: to stand up, to stand down, to stand off, to stand in, to stand by, to stand over—and twenty others. We score over the French there. The

Germans have it; but they stick their prepositions in front of the verbs. I think our way has much more punch to it. And what bull's-eyes you can score with the prepositional verb if only you'll search for it and, having found it, let the preposition come at the end of the sentence.

You know how odd moments stick in the memory. One stays in mine. I was dealing with retirement pensions. I was tired. Tired to the point of writing that awful jargon that passes for English. I'd written something like "I don't want what I've said to discourage you from pursuing this question further; rather I would wish that my arguments should prove an added stimulus. . . ." At that point I said to myself, "Now, come on, John, pull yourself together. That won't do: what is it you're trying to say?" And I pulled myself together (tired as I was)—I pulled myself together and searched and found it. "I don't want to put you off. I want rather to set you on." That was all. (What torment we have to go through to find what it is we're trying to say and how to say it in simple words.) That was all. Two simple sentences: put you *off*—set you *on*. Each ending with a preposition.

At that point, as I wrote this script, I went for a walk round the houses. Two lads were talking as I passed. One had three dogs on a leash. The other asked, as I went by, "What d'you keep dogs for?" I pricked up my ears at that (for more reasons than one, you know). But I'm always interested in the way people say things. Quite as much as in what they say. "What d'you keep dogs for?" That was his way of asking, "Why do you keep dogs?" It's most people's way. I fancy it's my way, as often as not. In my everyday speech, I mean. But suppose I'm writing a talk, and want to ask a question like that in it. Which form shall I use? Shall I say, "Why," or shall I say, "What for"? The first saves a word, and over the air a word saved in expressing a thought is a kingdom gained. The second not only wastes a word, but the sentence ends in the wrong sort of preposition, the one on which you drop your voice: "What d'you keep *dogs* for?" So you'd say, "Use the first." Yes, but I like what I say to get home; and to get at that lad, mustn't I use *his* form, not the best form? The times I've had to face that question: popular English or good English!

I think I've mostly dodged it. There's an idiom, I believe, lies behind both. Behind both stiff speech and loose talk. I think if you can get back to *that*, the boy on the bike and the girl at the counter and the man at the works and the woman in the home will all feel the speech you're using to be, perhaps not "true to life"—but something better: truer than life. It's a choice of word and a turn of speech that, if only you can get it, reflects the very soul and spirit of our language. It comes down, of course, through Shakespeare and the Authorized Version. But there's nothing old-fash-

it keeps to the homely words that belong to the oldest English and to homely turns of speech. That's the way out I've tried to find. Sometimes I've felt I've really found it, and then what a thrill! How often I've tried for it and failed. . . .

I do believe that's all I want to say about the technique of *composing* talk. All I want to say here and now, I mean. It's all I *can* say, anyhow. But about delivering over the air what's composed? Ah, there I think I'd better keep quiet. Each has a way that best suits himself (or herself, of course). Each must find that way: his or her own way. To find it one has to experiment, as I've said. You may even, I think, copy or mimic someone else's style now and again just to see if there's anything in it that fits you. But in the end, you've got to find your own self. Or rather, you've got to find or create a radio version of your real self (all that about being natural's no good, you know. Fine art's never natural, it only looks it. Or sounds it.) You've got to find or create a radio version of yourself, the radio quintessence of yourself, and then write for it, and go to the microphone and act it—with truth and sincerity.

Just two odd things from my own experience on the matter of delivery. My belief is that listeners hear speech, not in a sequence of words—one after the other—but in chunks; and what I try to do, though I may seldom succeed in my good intentions, is to throw out my words in bunches . . . like that . . . and then pause long enough for the listener to take that bunch in. I don't know if that's right for everyone; I don't even know if others would think it right for me; but it's been my theory, and it's what I've aimed at in practice, however often I may have missed the mark.

The other oddment is this. The matter of speed. Allover, average speed. Many of you have written to me from time to time: "What you were saying was so exciting. But oh I wish you'd gone slower. I missed some words." Yes, but if I'd gone slower you wouldn't have been excited. You'd have written then and said, "Why were you so solemn? You nearly sent me to sleep!" Oh, I know. . . . You can't have it both ways. When I *have* gone slow it's not been for that. It's been because of my many friends in Wales who have trouble in following too rapid English, however clearly it may be spoken.

Well, there you are. That's my last talk—a talk about giving a talk. It's a sort of—well, I won't say "last will and testament," but at any rate a testament. So now, I leave you for a year or two. I'm going to take things easy for a while—or try to. Then I must buckle to on all sorts of other explorations and enterprises. I know I shall have your good wishes. You have mine. Look after yourselves. Blessings on you. ■