

WHY I SPEAK

In John's Gospel, at chapter 12, Jesus, the consummate teacher and storyteller, says solemnly to his followers, "I have not spoken on my own. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say, and how to speak."

What to say, and how to speak.

I sense the precision of Jesus' words here. I, too, as a teaching-through-storytelling evangelizer, feel deeply that I am given "what to say, and how to speak."

I have no interest in speaking on my own—what easily becomes mere "opinionating." My words instinctively go through the filter of "what I have been given to say, and how to say it."

I have had to be apprenticed to this discipline of thought and intention and worthy speech.

Jesus adds what sounds like the prophet's claim: "Whatever I say is spoken just as the Father has instructed me." Like Isaiah, speaking to the weary a word that will rouse them, listening morning after morning as "he opens my ear that I might hear."

The Gospels reveal how deeply Jesus connected with his prophetic mission. It turned out to be a life-and-death connection to a costly mission.

How deeply do I dare to connect with my mission which, eventually, will become costly, too?

Jesus' mission was to remain in his Father and to reveal him everywhere.

My mission is to remain in Jesus—crucified Lord and risen Christ—and to reveal him everywhere.

Through words I fulfill this mission, and even more so, through the constant integrity with which I must show up in my world.

This is why I speak.



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Narrow path atop the 2000-foot high
Spencer Butte, Eugene, Oregon