

All Saint's Bible study – September 19th 2008

1. We talked about **teaching** that we remembered and what made lessons, and sermons, stick.

2. We discussed a study (book titled “Made to Stick” by Chip and Dan Heath, ISBN 1400064281, amazon.ca for \$17.64) which suggested **6 principles for making messages ‘sticky’**:
 - Simple – pare the message down to the core idea
 - Unexpected – create interest with surprise and by piquing curiosity
 - Concrete – use concrete images that people relate to
 - Credibility – can come from the status of the speaker or from factual evidence
 - Emotional – engage people on an emotional level
 - Stories – use story which helps people rehearse actions in their minds

3. **We read Luke 6:39-49** and discussed each parable in terms of the 6 principles.
 - The core messages seemed to be about teaching. Luke has emphasized this by placing them at the end of Jesus ‘sermon on the plain’. The blind leading the blind – you don’t get far by following false teaching; the speck of sawdust versus the plank – you won’t get far fiddling about on the edges if you are missing the main point (elephant in the room); you know a tree by its fruit – you need a fundamental transformation of the heart to perform ‘good things’; the house on the rock – build your life on the firm foundation of the teaching of Jesus.
 - Jesus uses unexpected humour and exaggeration to grab attention and make the teaching memorable
 - The images are all concrete and the audience can easily relate to them
 - The credibility comes from Jesus himself (more next week)
 - Each word picture holds a little story

4. We read some **other parables** to find their core messages and see how Jesus made his teaching stick, bearing in mind that his teaching was not written, but would be passed on orally. New wine in new skins, the faithful servant, the shrewd steward, the good Samaritan. We remarked how the priest and the Levite were following the law in avoiding what they thought might be the dead body of a man. Jesus' teaching challenged the law with the real imperatives of compassion. We were puzzled by the shrewd steward parable, where the steward is praised for being clever in worldly terms and the parable suggests that people of the light should learn how to use what they are given for eternal purposes.

In general in the parables we saw how Jesus was challenging people to question received wisdom and to accept something revolutionary. He does it in a way that can enter deep into the soul and last a lifetime!