

MAX LUCADO'S STORYTELLING

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The Saturday, March 24, 2001 *Dallas Morning News's* Religious Section (page 2G) features an article by Max Lucado on how to tell a story. No one would deny Max's talents for spinning quite a story. In fact, every denominational religious group today is enthralled with Max's "storytelling."

Max has spoken for Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches. He swapped pulpits with Buckner Fanning of Trinity Baptist Church and defended his doing so by saying, "Whenever I see a man call God 'Father,' I see a brother."

Paul R. Buckley wrote an article several years ago in the *Dallas Morning News* about Max Lucado. He begins, saying:

We've heard the joke before. A guy is getting a tour of heaven and is walked by rooms of folk from all different denominations. As he passes by one last room he is told to be very quiet. "Why?" he asks. The guide whispers to him: "Those are the people from the church of Christ - they think they're the only ones here."

Buckley then comments on the joke and Lucado, saying:

It's an old one, but Max Lucado still laughs because he knows as well as anyone the Church of Christ's no-one's-saved-but-us reputation. He's a Church of Christ minister, after all, as well as the hottest Christian writer around. And **he believes that there really are Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics in those other rooms** (Emph., MLW).

It was on Radio Station KJAK in Lubbock, Texas in December of 1996 that the "story-telling" Max Lucado said:

You see, in God, by virtue of your adoption, you have a divine affinity, you have eternal security, and you have a golden opportunity. I cannot imagine an orphan turning down an opportunity to be adopted. With one decision, with one raising of the hand, with one agreement to leave the orphanage, that person all of a sudden goes from being abandoned to being claimed, from having no name to a new name, no future to a new future - he leaves the orphanage, and enters the house of the Father.

That's what God offers you. No quiz, no examination. All you have to do is to say "yes" to the Father. And many of you have done that. But I have a hunch that not all of you have. I have a hunch that there are a few of you listening, even now, and God is using this to pull on your heart. The Holy Spirit is informing you of something that you have never really heard before - and that is, that God is ready to be your Father. Maybe you never understood that the invitation was for everyone. Maybe you thought that you were unworthy. Maybe now you do understand. God will make you worthy, and the invitation is for you.

And all you have to do is to call Him Father. Just call him Father. Just turn your heart to him right now as I am speaking. Call him your Father. And your Father will respond. Why don't you do that?

Father, I give my heart to you. I give you my sins. I give you my tears, I give you my fears, I give you my whole life. I accept the gift of your Son on the cross for my sins. And I ask you Father, To receive me as your child. Through Jesus I pray, Amen (Emph., MLW).

The announcer then stated, "And friend, if you prayed along with Max Lucado just now, here on UPWARDS, we want to welcome you into the family of God. We hope you will contact us and share your personal testimony. If you are already a believer, we thank you for praying for these new brothers and sisters in Christ."

Yes, Max Lucado is quite adept at "storytelling." If you are beginning to suspect that the word "storytelling" can have a double meaning - you are correct! Many parents have taught their children not to tell stories - that is; do not tell a lie.

In the March, 24, 2001 *Dallas Morning News* article Max gives five guidelines to keep in mind

as you tell stories. I offer the following comments on his guidelines for telling stories.

"Be accurate. Exaggeration and fabrication are easily detected." Absolutely! Wouldn't it be wonderful if Max would be "accurate" with the Word of God? Does the Bible teach that one is saved by reciting a "sinner's prayer?" Absolutely not! One must hear the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), believe God's Word (Heb. 11:6), repent of his sins (Lk. 13:3), confess Christ as God's Son (Rom. 10:9-10), and be immersed for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). The apostle Paul admonished, *"Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). Paul also said to the Ephesian elders, *"For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God"* (Acts 20:27). If Max were to make the same claim to the elders of his congregation, it would indeed be magnificent "storytelling."

"Be humble. Don't use a story as a back door for self-promotion." God ask Pharaoh, *"...How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me..."* (Exo. 10:3)? We ask the same question of Max and every other false teacher. Max's "storytelling" has made him popular and wealthy, but unless he repents it will cost him his soul.

"Be creatively simple. If a 10-year-old can't benefit from the story, don't tell it." One does not need to be creative with the gospel message -just tell it like it is. Paul said of Timothy, *"And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Tim. 3:15).

"Be diligent. The best storyteller is a bad one who didn't quit." If Max were "diligent" with God's truths, it would be the case that "the best storyteller was a good one, but he quit!"

"Be observant...every event is somebody's story. Tell it." Max should observe the Scriptures the way he does social events. The gospel in its purity all need to hear (Gal. 1:6-9; 10-12; 4:16).