

THE LANGUAGE WE SPEAK

One of the most important aspects of our church culture is related to the choice of words and verbiage we use to communicate God's truth to our family.

We have spent years working out specific phrases and terminology to explain some of the most important components of the Gospel and other Biblical concepts. On the surface level, this may not seem critically important, but for us at Grasslands, it is foundational in our efforts to be a church that unchurched people trust. If they trust us, they attend. If they attend they hear the Gospel. Faith comes by hearing. So, we want them to attend so they can hear the amazing news that God loves them and has a plan for their lives.

Generally speaking, we want to run every phrase, concept and idea through this filter: *If my unchurched next door neighbour shows up today, what am I saying that might confuse them, exclude them or otherwise bore them?*

We don't necessarily write our sermons FOR our unchurched neighbour, but we definitely have them in mind when we are writing.

Included below is a basic glossary of language and terminology that we often use to bridge the gap between the Bible and the listener.

GLOSSARY

Jesus - over Christ. Christ is a title and/or a job description. Our aim is to make Jesus as personable and knowable as possible. Using His glorious name is important to us. If you are reading text from the Bible that refers to Him as Christ, press pause and explain why the writer is using the title as opposed to the name.

Follower of Jesus - not Christian, not believer. Too many people in our culture today call themselves "Christian" who don't follow Jesus. For us, there is a clear distinction. Jesus never calls us to be Christians. He calls us to follow Him. So that's what we go with.

We refrain from using "believer" because, to an unchurched person, there is not enough context. We as "church people" know that "believer" encapsulates not only belief but also a commitment to trust and follow. Everyone believes something, so without explaining what a "believer" believes, "believer" is too vague.

Bible - instead of Scripture. For a person who is not yet convinced, Scripture insinuates too much authority. We know that the Bible is a sacred writing, which is why we call it

scripture. But to a pre-believing person, the Bible is not yet authoritative, and not likely seen as sacred. Let's keep things on common ground. While we may not all be in agreement to the Bible's authority and sacredness, we can all agree that the Bible is the Bible.

Other terms that you might want to consider an alternative to or stop to explain:

Repent = change your mind, change your direction

Came to Christ = began following Jesus

Saved = made right with God, fixed broken relationship, adopted into God's family

Salvation = see "saved"

Sin = stuff you've done that offends God, stuff that fails to meet God's standard

Disciple = follower, learner

Born Again = spiritual do-over

Amen = I agree, yeehaw!

Testimony = faith story

Covenant = promise, agreement

Steward = manage

Gospel = Good News, specifically related to God's plan to fix our relationship with Him

Lord = leader, boss, Commander-in-Chief, the one in charge

Atonement = pay the price

Fellowshipping = Just don't say this.

And then there are the obvious \$10 theological terms:

- Sanctification
- Justification
- Propitiation
- Exegesis
- Regeneration

(to name a few)