



## Reflections by the Lake Devotions for an Unordinary Time

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Silent Movies and Enacted Parables  
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As Christians, all of us are familiar with the parables Christ spoke in order to teach us truths about God and about how we are to live in this world. We find the profound truths communicated in these simple stories about everyday life to be easy to understand.

There was a man, a pastor, that came into my life late in his ministry career. He had been a biblical scholar, seminary professor and successful pastor. I met him in his later years when he served as our interim pastor at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh. Dr. John Lewis was a kind pastor and a gifted preacher. He introduced me to a concept that has had a huge impact upon me. Dr. Lewis would often speak of what he called "enacted parables." He was referring to, not the words, but the actions of Christ while he was on earth. Dr. Lewis explained that everything Jesus did was, in fact, a parable demonstrating truths about God and about the way we should live in the world. Take the interaction of Jesus with Zacchaeus as an example. Christ called Zacchaeus down from the tree thereby demonstrating to all around that God did not hold Zacchaeus' background against him and that his life could be turned for the better if only he would just come down out of that tree. When you and I are "up a tree," it will be good to remember Zacchaeus, and this enacted parable. Even Christ's death can, and should, be seen as an enacted parable about self-surrender and the eternal promises it brings.

Like no other time in my life, lately I have been besieged by words, to the point that it is very difficult to perceive truth in them. This has prompted me to reflect upon the concept of "enacted" parables. I never much liked silent movies. But, I can appreciate the actors who had to communicate their messages without words. All this set me to thinking. What if I envisioned myself acting out life as a silent film? What if I uttered fewer words and let my actions communicate? I'm afraid I would be a flop at the box office. But maybe, just maybe, my life could become an enacted parable communicating God's good news to those around me.

Here is some Godly advice for all of us, excerpted from a daily devotion in *God Calling* entitled "Too Much Talk." "Discourage too much talking. Deeds live and echo down the ages—words perish. As Paul wrote, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal' . . . Rely less on words. Always remember speech is perceived by your natural senses. Make it your servant, never your master."

A Children's Song:

Be careful little mouth what you say,  
Be careful little mouth what you say,  
For the Father up above is looking down  
In all his love.  
Be careful little mouth what you say.

Be careful little hands what you do,  
Be careful little hands what you do,  
For the Father up above is looking down  
in all his love.  
Be careful little hands what you do.

A Prayer:

Father help me keep my mouth shut more. Instead of words, help me conduct my life as an enacted parable of your grace and truth. Amen.