

Communication is Key  
Pastor John Hicks  
First United Methodist Church

A lady went to a marriage counselor. She stated, "I want to divorce my husband".

"Do you have any grounds for divorce?" the counselor asked.

"Why, yes. We have almost an acre."

"You don't understand," said the counselor. "What I want to know is if you and your husband have a grudge."

"That we don't have," she said. "But we do have a carport."

The counselor shook his head and said, "I'm sorry, but I still don't see any reason why you should divorce your husband."

] "It's just that the man can't carry on an intelligent conversation," she replied.

We laugh, but problems with communication are a part of life. Communication is a tricky thing. Is what we think we are saying really being understood by those we are trying to communicate with? We can't assume what we say will always be understood, even if it seems obvious to us. In the newspaper column, "Ask Heloise", she once gave a household hint in which she shared that one should put a cup of liquid in the cavity of a turkey when roasting it. Believe it or not, someone wrote her that "the turkey tasted great, but the plastic cup melted." Now she is very careful to say: "POUR a cup of liquid in the cavity of a turkey."

Communication is key, and can make all the difference. Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale survived 2,714 days as a POW in Vietnam. On one occasion, the North Vietnamese handcuffed Stockdale's hands behind his back, locked his legs in heavy irons, and dragged him from his prison cell to sit in an un-shaded courtyard so other prisoners could see what happened to anybody who refused to cooperate. According to the Navy's official report, Stockdale remained in that position for three days. The guards would not let him sleep, and Stockdale was beaten repeatedly. After one beating, Stockdale heard the sound of a towel snapping. He noticed that the noise was not random.

History has shown that POWs and hostages have been sustained by ingeniously improvised lifelines of communication. In Vietnam, a clever tap code, in which the number of sequence of taps spelled out letters of the alphabet, became the prisoners' chief means of communication. What James Stockdale heard sitting out in that prison courtyard that day was a towel snapping out in prison code the letters GBUJS. It was a message he would never forget: "God Bless You Jim Stockdale." He will tell you that it was that simple act of communication that kept him going.

Communication is key, and can make all the difference. In a similar simple act of communication to help us keep going in the midst of what's happening to us, Christ is tapping out an encouraging message. He's saying "God bless you! You can make it!" To those who have ears to hear, let this truth be communicated!