

# PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

## HOW TO RUIN A POTENTIALLY GREAT ASSEMBLY

How many times have you entered into a church building excited about assembling with saints (**Heb.10:25**), only to be soon disappointed by what you saw and heard? Such has happened to me and Tricia on several occasions. In this article we will explore some of the ways in which what could potentially have been great assemblies are ruined. They are ruined when:

### PEOPLE DEMONSTRATE LITTLE, IF ANY, REVERENCE FOR GOD

Many are the times I have been at an assembly wherein people treat God irreverently. I’ve seen professed saints chat and giggle amongst their friends and family in the pews. I’ve seen those who claim to be blood-bought sing, what sure seems to be, half-heartedly. I’ve seen teens write notes to each other while the parents look on. I have heard people clip nails and smack gum. I have seen people text message and take calls. Where has the reverence gone for so many? Where is the attitude of the psalmist: *“Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him”* (**Ps. 33:8**). Why have so many forgotten the words of the author of the letter to the Hebrews: *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”* (**Heb. 12:28**). How horrible and sad that some think it fine to tread upon God (**Isa. 1:12**).

### SONGS ARE SUNG THAT CONTAIN FALSE CONCEPTS

**Col. 3:17** reads this way: *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”* “Whatsoever” certainly includes our singing. Understanding that singing is praising God (**Acts 16:25**), should not those who sing make sure the words they lift are in accordance with God’s Word? Understanding that singing also equates to teaching (**Col. 3:16**), should not those who sing make sure they are teaching sound words (**2 Tim.1:13**)? I have been to assemblies wherein nobody seems to think about the words they sing. I will give you just one example. There is a favorite song of many (I do not think it is in our songbook) entitled: “Just A Little Talk With Jesus.” The first line reads this way: *“I once was lost in sin but Jesus took me in, and then a little light from Heaven filled my soul; it bathed my heart in love and wrote my name above, and just a little talk with Jesus made me whole.”* Now what if I preached this as an invitation? What if I said: *“If you are lost in sin this morning and your name has not been written in heaven above, pray to Jesus right now to be made whole.”* Hmm. Listen, I am not trying to be the “Song Police,” but I am affirming that thought needs to be put behind the songs people choose to lead.

### THE LORD’S SUPPER IS ABUSED

The Lord’s memorial meal (**Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25**) may be abused in many ways. Some of the ways in which I have seen it suffer harm are: (1) talking about everything but the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine before partaking, (2) thanking the Father for dying on the cross, (3) taking the supper to shut-ins and to those hospitalized, and (4) a local church offering a left-over (make-up) supper for those who missed an earlier assembly. Many seem to have forgotten that it’s possible to partake of the Lord’s Supper unworthily (**1 Cor. 11:27**).

### PRAYERS ARE ROTE

Many times I’ve been in an assembly and could have rightfully guessed what the speaker would say at one point or another during the first and last prayer. *“Give the speaker a ready recollection,” “Give us safe passage home,” “Guide, guard, and direct us,” “Help us to apply the lesson to our lives,”* etc, etc, etc. All just parrot talk. Have we forgotten the words of our Master? Jesus said plainly: *“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions...”* (**Matt. 6:7**).

### PREACHERS PREACH COTTON CANDY SERMONS

A preacher’s job is: to reprove, to rebuke, and to exhort those listening via the Word of God, rightly divided (**2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2**). One cannot do so by telling jokes and “preaching” watered down, make-everyone-feel-good sermons. Few are the preachers I have ever seen that would dare to fulfill the charge given to Isaiah the prophet: *“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins”* (**Isa.58:1**).

### SUNDRY OTHER WAYS

Tight pockets (**2 Cor. 8:7; 9:6**); Erecting stumbling blocks (**Rom. 14:13, 19**); Unfriendliness (**Rom. 12:10**); on it goes.

Let’s make sure we are striving not to be guilty of ruining an assembly here at Palmer Road.