

"You doing okay?", "How is your stress level?", "Are you putting in longer hours now?"

Questions people ask me with somber, concerned expressions since I started my new job.

I'm considering the advantages of letting people believe that my new job is such a burden. As it turns out, I'm the least troubled about work I've ever been. Guess why? Because up to this point, my job has been "manageable" as in I sometimes had the impression that I could get a handle on everything about my job if only I worked harder or longer or smarter or found the right setup. I am no longer under this impression at any time. This means significantly less stress because there's far less believing the lie that I can do everything. I leave work immensely satisfied almost every day. And (bonus) I'm praying more and more intensely.

And, work is a lot of fun. Stretching, and really, really fun.

AND... I got a card in the mail. It said "Blessing: You make a Difference"... a congratulations for my 15 year anniversary with Wycliffe. (a) what a nice card and (b) I can't believe my Wycliffe ministry has lasted for 15 years so far. Thank you!

... "the kingdom of God"... Jesus used this phrase a lot. What if a language has no word for "king" or "kingdom"? Apparently sometimes not having a word can be an advantage.

English has the words "king" and "kingdom", but it is part of history for us. We don't have Jesus' experience of kings and kingdoms. In Jesus' day kings shaped lives. If we lived then: we would live the way the king wanted us to live. How much we had of daily comforts and hassles and war and peace would depend on him: on 1) his concern for us and 2) his relationships with the kings who ruled the areas around us and wished we belonged to them.

Jesus was trying to get people to take God seriously as their king, the One who shaped their lives. That's why he talked about God's kingship in comparisons.

- The way God shapes our lives is like a woman who put leaven in a lump of dough...
- The way God rules His people is like a man who planted a seed...
- What it's like to know God as king is like a treasure a man found in a field...
- Our Father in heaven, rule over us here...

The language without a word for "king" or "kingdom" does have verbs for "rule" or "govern". The phrase "God rules" is closer to Jesus' meaning, even in English. The reason it's translated "kingdom of God" rather than something like "God rules" is that we have the words "king" and "kingdom" even though we don't have the experience. It turns out not having words for king/kingdom can be an advantage. When you have the word but no experience of what the word refers to, you may assume you understand and not stop to ponder.

CONTACT ME

Sheryl Howe
sahowe@wbt.org
704-765-2002
6114 A Webster Way
Waxhaw NC 28173

HOME OFFICE

Wycliffe Bible Translators
www.wycliffe.org

WAYS TO GIVE

ONLINE
www.tinyurl.com/sherylhowe

PHONE
800-WYCLIFFE (992-5433)

MAIL
PO Box 628200
Orlando FL 32862

Check payable to
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