

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## I am very easy to wind up

I am very easy to wind up. There are certain every day words and phrases that have changed their meaning. I know what they mean now, I fully understand the sentiment involved, and yet inwardly I can feel myself go tense when it happens.

I know I am not the worst at this, I have some friends who when they hear “decimate” automatically are reaching for calculators to find out if it is 10% that is being removed, or whether “annihilate” would have been a better choice. However, that does not stop me on others.

One is “carrot and stick.” This is now used to describe a mixture of incentives and punishments. The carrot is the reward, the stick the deterrent. However, if you picture a carrot and stick being used as the means of encouraging a donkey or mule to move forward, the stick is held and never used for beating and the carrot dangles on a string in front of the animal just out of reach. It is there to give an incentive to the donkey to move forward; but is unobtainable. So, when I hear carrot and stick instead of a positive picture I see in my mind, long term false promises pretending to offer a prize but ultimately delivering nothing.

There are of course many others, often they are euphemisms to hide unpleasant concepts. A company going through restructuring, is one whose employees are concerned about their employment. Whenever a “consultation” is held, I am wondering if it is a real desire to hear a view from others or simply an informing of intentions. I can go on, and those nearest to me will agree that I often do!

Jesus was clear, he said “let your yes be yes and your no be no.” It can’t get more basic than that. This concept of simplicity of communication is at odds with the normal way we live. When applied it makes life simpler and makes for less confusion. Jargon words and phrases become redundant, and long tortuous sentences a thing of the past.

I don’t want to lose our idioms. “Leading horses to water” and the like have an essential part to play in language. They often shed light on behaviour in a delightful way. (There is a German one for hypocrisy that I am enjoying at the moment, “He preaches water, but drinks wine.”) But let’s also keep to clarity and simplicity as well.

**Archdeacon Michael Everitt**