

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of August 30th, 2020

My brother recently sent me a video of my five-year-old nephew, who is a little on the small side for his age. They were working outside on their acreage in a rock pile. My nephew was walking toward my brother saying, "Dad, look what I found," in a matter-of-fact voice.

He was holding up a garter snake that had to be two feet long.

My brother was backing away slowly, and saying "OK, let him go and watch him get away!" Then my nephew laughed, and with delight, he started chasing his dad with the snake.



Before bed that night, my nephew assured his dad that he had let the snake go. But my brother sent a picture from a tiny corner nook in the kitchen. Curled up on the floor in a cozy series of loops was the snake.



In any group, you will find some people like my fearless nephew who enjoy snakes. Others are disturbed by them or even terrified. If we were to get everyone together to talk about snakes, we would hear both sides. My nephew might hear some reasons for care and caution around snakes, while those with anxiety might find some new strength. Perhaps the whole group would learn something.

Churches can be a place where we listen to each other. We can share our fears and draw strength from those who are not afraid. Or we can learn to have more caution where we were careless. This is the blessing of being a diverse group of people who don't always agree with each other. However, there is something even more powerful at work when we are together.

Jesus is here. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus shares his strength and wisdom with us as a group. The Father, the creator of all things (even enormous garter snakes) is directing all of history toward a good end.

May the one God be with you today and every day, and grant you peace.

With love,

Pastor Joel

Summer Neighbourhood Stories (in case you missed them last week)

Marilyn P: "Joel's stories inspired me and reminded me that I was going to share a couple at some point..."

- As I was riding my bike into our driveway one day in July, a young woman who had been chatting with a neighbor as I rode by, came running up to me excitedly, introduced herself, and asked if she could ride with me next time. She said she was a visiting post-doctoral student from China, was living just up the street, and was afraid to go alone. The neighbor she had been chatting with (a Christian friend of ours) had offered to lend her a bicycle. He was also doing Bible study with her via WeChat and had invited her to English classes at his church! She had already decided to believe in God, and that God was blessing her through so many new Christian friends! As we rode around the lake together early most mornings for a number of weeks, she exclaimed happily over the beautiful scenes of the lake: Geese, ducks, pelicans, and red-winged blackbirds in profusion, and the sun sparkling on the water. She also loved our big, clear sky – so different than her smoggy city in China, she said. And she became super excited when there were white clouds of any shape or size in the sky! It was delightful to share in her delight in our beautiful city as we rode each day. My new friend moved to an apartment on campus in early August, and was too busy to ride for a few weeks. But we have now started our daily rides again!
- On a sad note, our elderly next door neighbor whom we had known for 28 years, became ill and was in the hospital and then palliative care for some time before passing away. As she had no children and her husband also wasn't well, another neighbor, who had known her for much longer and was very close to her, was making health care arrangements for her and her husband, visiting them both, dealing with their household effects, and eventually made the funeral arrangements. She was quite stressed. Ron and I tried to help wherever we could with the house and yard, and also provided a listening ear for her to express her stress and grief. It was a sobering time for us all, but also drew us closer together as neighbors, for which I am thankful.
- Now on a fun note, a young girl on our street has been cheering up the neighborhood this spring and summer by writing "punny" jokes on a sandwich board each day, complete with hand-drawn illustrations! We always take time to read them and give her a "thumbs up" as we walk or ride by, and if the family is outside we stop to congratulate our new young friend and chat with the family. She loves it when I ask her to pose beside the board so I can take a photo to post on Facebook! (With parental permission, of course.)

Opportunities for Fall

Reading Through the Old Testament

Beginning in September, Pastor Richard will be facilitating a new small group: “Reading Through the Old Testament.” This group will meet online, using Zoom. A schedule will be provided with weekly readings. We will plan to connect once a week to discuss what we have read, share anything that has stood out to us, and ask any questions we may have. Please contact [Pastor Richard](#), or leave a message at (306) 359-1450, if you are interested in joining. Watch for updates.

Renovaré

Pastor Richard’s part time position with us allows him to continue to lead [Renovaré Canada](#). Here is a brief description, from Pastor Richard, of what this organization is all about:

What is Renovaré Canada? Renovaré Canada was founded and exists with the hope and intention to teach, model and inspire genuine Christian experience in Canada by way of the disciplines of the spiritual life. The seeds of renewal, which will bring change to our communities, culture, and country, reside in those of God’s people who are being formed in the image of Christ (genuine Christian experience). The disciplines of the Christian life are a means of responding to the grace of God and partnering with the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about this much needed renewal in each of our lives, both individually and collectively. This is the heartbeat of Renovaré Canada.

Renovaré has an [Online Renewal Group](#) starting in September. This small group will focus on spiritual formation into Christlikeness. The core components will include daily devotional readings, supplemental readings on the spiritual life, online conversation via written posts, and live video chats. The group will meet on Monday evenings via Zoom. For more information, or for a schedule of meetings/readings, please contact [Pastor Richard](#), or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

Also beginning in September, Pastor Richard is offering an online course through Renovaré, entitled [Wendell Berry: A Spirituality of Sustenance](#). Wendell Berry is a Christian author whose many writings include essays, fiction, and poetry. Class sessions will be on Thursday evenings. For more information, or for a course outline, please contact [Pastor Richard](#), or leave a message at (306) 359-1450.

Spiritual Disciplines Series: Worship

What is worship? Adele Calhoun states: “Worship happens whenever we intentionally cherish God and value God above all else in life.”

We were made to worship, and we will worship something – something will take the ultimate place in our lives. The question is whether or not that something is God. When it is, this is true worship; when it is not it is idolatry. Richard Foster has noted: “Worship is something I can do and in doing it I have assurance that it is moving me more and more toward my true destiny.” Our true destiny is to worship God with all that we’ve got; anything less, again, is idolatry.

Adele Calhoun: “The simple truth is everybody looks to something or someone to give their lives meaning. Worship reveals the somethings or someones we value most. What we love and adore and focus on forms us into the people we become. . . We may not consider our obsession with these things acts of worship, but they are. They are what we look to, to get us up in the morning and keep us going throughout the day.”

So what do you worship? Is your worship true (are you worshipping God) or is it idolatry (the worship of things created by God)?

I think of the rich young ruler in Scripture, when asked to sell all of his possessions and follow Jesus could not bring himself to do it – because his wealth, his material possessions, were his ultimate desire. His wealth was what got him up in the morning. The scripture states that the rich young man went away “sad because he had a lot of stuff” (Matthew 19:22). True worship, on the other hand, leads to joy and the surrender or laying down of everything else in life (and again, with joy!). I think of the parable told by Jesus in Matthew 13:44: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is our greatest treasure and alone is to be worshipped (cherished, desired, given our allegiance). He alone is worthy to receive praise and honour, for he is the creator of all things and by him all things exist (Rev. 4:11). “To worship God,” suggests Donald Whitney, “means to ascribe the proper worth to God.” Whitney goes on to write: “The more we focus on God, the more we understand and appreciate his infinite worth. As we understand and appreciate this, we can’t help but respond to him. Just as an indescribable sunset or a breathtaking mountain top vista evokes a spontaneous response, so we cannot encounter the worthiness of God without the response of worship.” So, one of the practical pieces in learning to worship involves learning who God is – becoming familiar with his character. One of the great ways to do

this is through the discipline of study and Scripture reading. As we learn who God is, worship then is an appropriate response.

It is important to recognize that worship is more than just going to church or singing songs or even reciting Scripture. In Matthew 15:8 we find these words of Jesus: “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” Worship involves the reorienting of our lives (the desires or our hearts) around God once again.

One of the results of faithful, authentic worship is summed up well by Marva Dawn. She writes: “If the Church’s worship is faithful, it will eventually be subversive of the culture surrounding it, for God’s truth transforms the lives of those nurtured by it. Worship will turn our values, habits, and ideas upside-down as it forms our character; only then will we be genuinely right-side up eternally. Only then will we know a Joy worthy of our destiny.”

I encourage you this week to take an inventory of what it is you worship (whether true worship or idolatry). Work through these questions:

- What is it I value most in my life? What gets me moving in the morning? What do I look forward to most in my day?
- How do I spend my time? My money?
- Are there things that need changing on the lists above?
- Consider the character of God. List characteristics of God that come to your mind. What do these call you to or mean to you?
- Take time to thank God for the gift of this day, your life, his Spirit within you. Ask him to help you keep him at the center of your life this day – seeking first the Kingdom of God.
- Throughout your day, check your actions: do they reflect the character of God and are they pointing to God? or are they reflective of a desire that is for something other than God?

Tithes and Offerings

We want to thank everyone for their faithfulness in maintaining their giving during this pandemic. We know that many of you have gone out of your way to mail in your offerings or bring them to the church, and it is appreciated *very much*.

If you'd like to have your offering picked up, please contact the church by [email](#), by leaving a message at (306) 359-1450, or by contacting one of the pastors or board members to arrange for a pick-up.

Daily Bread Devotionals

The Daily Bread devotionals for September, October, and November have been dropped off at the church. If anyone would like one (or more), please contact the church by [email](#), or by leaving a message at (306) 359-1450. We can leave them in the church's mailbox for you to pick up, or mail them to you.

What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Friday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for the link.

Children and Youth

Planning for fall programs is underway. Watch here for updates.



I'm a pretty patient person...just as long as I'm not kept waiting for anything.

My idea of a strenuous floor exercise is sweeping it.

Q. What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down?

A. It gets toad away.

And here's one just for you, Pastor John:

Q. What did the pop star do when he locked himself out?

A. He sang until he found the right key!

Balak, Balaam, a Donkey, and the Angel of the Lord

Pastor Norma's sermon from August 30, 2020

Numbers 22 – 24

Prayer: Dear Lord God, Thank you that we can continue to fellowship and worship and learn together as a gathered community in these days. This morning, open our hearts and minds to the promptings from your Spirit. Amen.

In this Biblical story there are four main characters. The two major characters are Balak and Balaam. I have often mixed them up. But here's a little help. Balak ends in "k," and Balak was the king of Moab. Balaam ends with "m" and, in these passages, he is a messenger for God.

First on the scene is Balak, king of Moab who is worried about winning a battle with the Israelites. Then comes Balaam, a pagan priest or diviner or sorcerer, who sometimes consults the God of Israel. (We learn about Balaam and his lack of sincere worship of God throughout his life from Numbers 31, I Peter 2, Jude, and Revelation.) Then the Angel of the Lord appears, followed by the donkey.

The donkey, Balaam's personal donkey, has been with him for many years. This donkey speaks for herself when God opens her mouth. Not special words from God, but from her own outrage at Balaam's behaviour.

At this time the Israelites have left the desert and their 40 years of wandering, and are making their way to the promised land of Canaan, fighting tribes along the way—and winning. Balak's territory is coming up, and he's scared. This army that seems to always win, are camped in the plains of Moab across from Jericho. Balak could actually see them. He is terrified. These people are taking over the land. Kings stronger than Balak have lost to them. What should he do?

Numbers 22:1-6: "The Israelites set out and camped in the plains of Moab, across the Jordan from Jericho. Now Balak, son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. Moab was in great dread of the people, because they were so numerous. Moab was overcome with fear of the people of Israel. And Moab said to the elders of Midian, 'This hoard will now lick up all that is around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.' Now Balak, son of Zippor, was king of Moab at that time. He sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor, at Pethor, which is on the Euphrates in the land of Ammon, to summon him, saying, 'A people have come out of Egypt and have spread over the face of the earth, and they have settled next to me. Come now, curse this people for me, for they are stronger than I. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that whomever you bless, is blessed, and whomever you curse, is cursed.'"

So Balak's emissaries set out with money for the divination he wants from Balaam. Some say it was the fee for cursing the Israelites, because that's what Balak wanted Balaam to do—curse the children of Israel, God's people, so that he could win the battle. Or maybe not even have to fight it.

So the emissaries deliver the message to Balaam and he invites them to stay overnight. And in the morning he would tell them what the Lord directed him to do. He saw there was a great amount of money but he wanted to at least give lip service to the fact that God was in control.

That night God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men visiting you?" Balaam replied with the story Balak had sent. "There is a horde of people coming from Egypt who are taking over the land. Balak wants me to come and put a curse on them so perhaps he could stand up to them and drive them away." But God replied, "No, don't go with them. Do not put a curse on these people. These people are blessed."

So Balaam sent the officials back to Moab and King Barak. He told them, "God will not let me go with you." So the officials left and returned to Balak and reported that Balaam had refused to come with them.

Balak did not like this. He was frightened to his core as to what the Israelites would do to him and his land. So he tried again. He sent more money and more officials who were even more important than the last group. He desperately wanted Balaam to come and curse the Israelites.

Numbers 22:16-20: "They came to Balaam and said to him, 'Thus says Balak, son of Zippor, 'Do not let anything hinder you from coming to me, for I will surely do you great honour, and whatever you say to me, I will do. Come, curse this people for me.' But Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, 'Although Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of the Lord my God, to do less, or more. You remain here as the others did, so that I may learn what more the Lord may say to me.' That night, God came to Balaam and said to him, 'If the men have come to summon you, get up and go with them. But only do what I tell you to do.'"

So Balaam got up the next morning, saddled his donkey and went with the Moabite officials. God was upset with him. Actually he was angry. Verse 22 says "But God was angry that Balaam was going," But why? Hadn't God given Balaam his permission?

Well, God knew Balaam's heart. It was deceptive, self-centred. God knew that Balaam did not wholeheartedly worship him. He tried to manipulate many gods, used magic potions, sorcery. He also liked money. However, God told Balaam since the officials were there to continue on.

But then God sent the angel of the Lord to stand in the road to block Balaam's way. Balaam, seated on his faithful donkey, along with two servants, were riding along on the way to Moab. The donkey, not Balaam, saw the angel of the Lord with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey, like any self-respecting donkey, bolted off the road into a field.

Balaam was not happy. He beat the donkey and turned it back on the road. Then the angel of the Lord stood in a place where the road narrowed between two vineyard walls. Again the donkey, not Balaam, saw the angel of the Lord and tried to squeeze by crushing Balaam's foot against the wall. Balaam beat the donkey again.

So the angel of the Lord moved farther down the road and stood in a place too narrow for the donkey to get by at all. This time, when the donkey saw the angel he just sat down in the road with Balaam seated on him. Boy, was Balaam furious. In a fit of rage, he beat the donkey again with his staff.

At this point the Lord gave the donkey the ability to speak. "What have I done to deserve you beating me three times?"

"You made me look like a fool" Balaam shouted. "If I had a sword with me I would kill you."

"All your life you have ridden on me. I am that same donkey. Have I ever done anything like this before?" replied the donkey.

"No," Balaam admitted.

Numbers 22:31-35: "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down, falling on his face. The angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? I have come out as an adversary because your way is perverse before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away from me, surely just now I would have killed you and let it live. Then Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, 'I have sinned. For I did not know that you were standing in the road to oppose me. Now, therefore, if it is displeasing to you, I will return home.' The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, 'Go with the men. But speak only what I tell you to speak.' So Balaam went on with the officials of Balak."

Now when King Balak heard that Balaam was finally on the road, he went out to meet him. He was a little irked: "Didn't I send you an urgent invitation? Why didn't you come right away? Didn't you believe me when I said I would make you a wealthy man?"

To this, Balaam replied: "Hey look, I'm here but you have to know that I have no power to say whatever I want. I will speak only the message that God puts in my mouth."

The next morning, Balak took Balaam to a high place where he could look down on the people of Israel spread out below him.

Balaam told Balak to prepare seven altars and prepare seven young bulls and seven rams to sacrifice. Balak did that and the two of them sacrificed the animals on each altar.

It sounds very much like how the Israelites were told to sacrifice a burnt offering. Yet here nothing is said about God, or prayer to him to curse the Israelites. However, Balaam did tell Balak to stand by the burnt offerings and he would go to see if the Lord would communicate with him. So he went to the top of a hill and God met him there and gave him a message to take to Balak. This was the message that Balaam delivered:

Numbers 23:7b-10: “Balak has brought me from Aram, the king of Moab from the eastern mountains. ‘Come, curse Jacob for me. Come, denounce Israel.’ ‘How can I curse whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced? For from the top of the crags, I see him. From the hills, I behold him. Here is a people living alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the dust cloud of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his.’”

When King Balak heard the message, he was outraged and said, “Balaam, what have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies and instead you have blessed them?” And Balaam repeats that he can only speak the words that the Lord puts in his mouth.

Balak takes Balaam to another place where he can look down on another part of the nation of Israel. “You can’t see all of them but at least, curse this many.” They did more sacrifices and Balaam went off to learn God’s message.

Numbers 23:18b-23: “Rise, Balak, and hear. Listen to me, oh son of Zippor. God is not a human being that he should lie, or a mortal that he should change his mind. Has he promised and will he not do it? Has he spoken and will he not fulfil it. See, I received a command to bless. He has blessed and I cannot revoke it. He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel. The Lord their God is with them, acclaimed as a king among them. God, who brings them out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox for them. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel. And now, it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, ‘See what God has done.’”

Balak’s response to that was, “Fine. But if you won’t curse them, at least don’t bless them.” Balaam replied, “I’m sure I told you that I can do only what the Lord tells me.”

Balak tries once more. He took him to the top of Mount Peor that overlooked the wasteland, or the desert, and they built some more altars and offered a ram and a bull on each one. But this time with a difference.

Balaam now knew that the Lord was determined to bless Israel. So he didn't go with his superstitions to look for omens and signs outside of God. Instead he looked out toward the wilderness and saw the people of Israel camped tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him and he delivered a longer, sincere message.

He starts with saying that His eyes have been opened and he sees clearly. He hears the word of God. He acknowledges the Most High God, bowing down with his eyes wide open.

Numbers 24:17-19: "I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel. It shall crush the borderlines of Moab and the territory of all the Shethites. Edom will become the possession, Seir, a possession of his enemies, while Israel does valiantly. One out of Jacob shall rule, and destroy the survivors of the earth."

So Balaam goes on and continues to speak to the many different kings and nations who wanted to stop the Israelites from invading their territory. And, to them, he blesses Israel and tells the other nations that their destiny is destruction, and that some of them will be taken captive.

Numbers 24:23-25: "Again he uttered his oracle, saying, 'Alas, who shall live when God does this? But ships shall come up from Kittim and shall afflict Asshur and Eber, and he also shall perish forever.' Then Balaam got up and went back to his place. And Balak also went his way."

So it appears that Balak gave up trying and Balaam went on his way. So what is the purpose of this account? Is there anything to be learned?

Well, there is a heavy emphasis on obedience. God wants us to listen to him like he wanted Balaam to listen to him. Balaam sort of parrots that back as "I can only say what God puts in my mouth." Until his spiritual eyes are opened and then he was sincere.

There's also the fact that God uses many unusual ways to speak to us. Balaam got a talking donkey and an angel of the Lord with a sword that he couldn't see. The King of Moab got a sometime prophet of God who finally hears the word of the Lord. Probably not the kind of prophet we'd want on our pastoral staff. It took a while for Balaam to get the message. God does sometimes use unusual ways to get our attention.

But for me, this passage is mostly about God's love and care and commitment to His people. He always keeps his promises. He protected his people as they made their way to the Promised Land. As God first said to Balaam "These people are blessed."

Today, when we make that commitment to be restored in fellowship and relationship with God, then we are his people. And he wants us to know that he will care for us, he will lead us, he will protect us. He will lead us throughout our lives. And he'd like us to trust him, and praise him.

We sang earlier:

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days
Almighty victorious, Thy great name we PRAISE.

When we sing hymns like that, I believe we need to make them our own. At least if you are as limited as I am in finding words of praise for God. The hymns and psalms give me the words and I make them mine.

God leads and guides us, as he did the people of Israel. He protects us many times through unusual means and sometimes we are totally unaware. But he is there, leading, guiding, protecting, loving.

Later we will be singing, God of grace and God of glory. It's a prayer to God in response to his promise to us "Don't be afraid! Don't be discouraged! I will personally go ahead of you in your life. I will be with you. I will not fail you nor abandon you."

You are my people.

Benediction: May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favour and give you his peace. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Tithing during the pandemic

With the COVID-19 crisis limiting contact with others and restricting meetings of groups, please do not neglect the financial needs of our church.

We have several ways to provide your regular tithes and donations to the church:

1. Mail your gifts to the church or call and leave a message at (306) 359-1450 to arrange for an in-person pick-up. Please place your cheque in your regular offering envelope (or any envelope marked "Offering"), and seal that inside another envelope addressed to the church:

First Baptist Church
2241 Victoria Ave
Regina SK S4P 0S4

2. Establish a **Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) Plan**. This will automatically transfer funds from your account into the FBC Regina account on a regular basis. Please email the church or contact the Treasurer if you would like to set up PAR, or change your commitment.
3. Make an online donation:
 - Use **Interac e-Transfer** to donate from your phone or computer to FBCRegina@gmail.com (*no fee or cost to the church*)
 - Use a credit card with a PayPal account via the **PayPal Giving Fund** (*no fee or cost to the church... 100% of your donation reaches us and contributes to our mission*)
 - Use a credit card or PayPal via **CanadaHelps** (*a fee of 4% is deducted from the donation*)
 - Use a credit or debit card via **FBC ChurchTrac** (*the church is charged a fee of approximately 3% for each donation*)

PLEASE refer to our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for more specific information on these contribution methods. You may also contact the treasurer at (306) 775-1497 or email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net for further details.

The Benefits of Online Giving (especially during the pandemic)

1. No mailing, dropping off, or picking up of tithes is required.
2. The church receives e-Transfers immediately...no waiting for the tellers to physically count and deposit the cash and cheques.
3. It is actually SAFER! Did you know that every cheque you write has ALL your bank account information on it (those computer-like numbers at the bottom)? As well as your name and address. Also, cash and cheques can be misplaced or lost in the mail.
4. Signing up for PAR means you don't have to remember to provide a weekly or monthly offering, and ensures the church has a steady source of revenue to cover expenses. Only the treasurer and the bank would initially see your banking information for registration.
5. Interac e-Transfers are easy to use and secure. Your money doesn't actually travel by email or text message – just the notifications and deposit instructions. The receiving and sending banks transfer the funds to each other using established and secure banking procedures with encryption and authentication. No one sees your banking information.

NOTE: Giving via CanadaHelps and PayPal Giving Fund are less attractive as they do not distribute the funds to us immediately. Depending on when the donation was made, we may wait until the following month to receive it. As well, CanadaHelps deducts a fee for every donation. However, the donor receives a tax receipt immediately, so the church does not have to issue one.

That being said, we will definitely accept your tithes and offerings by any method you choose. Please let the church know if we can assist in any possible way. THANK YOU!

Day 7 of SOCIAL
Distancing: Struck
up a conversation
with a spider today.
Seems nice. He's a
web designer.

A salesman dropped in to see a customer. Not a soul was in the office except a big shaggy dog emptying wastebaskets. The salesman stared at the animal, wondering if his imagination could be playing tricks. The dog looked up and said, "Don't be surprised, buddy, this is part of my job."

"You?" stammered the visitor. "You are talking! I can't believe it! Incredible, utterly incredible! I'm going to tell your boss what a prize he has in you – a dog that can talk!"

"No, no!" pleaded the dog. "Don't do it, please! If that guy ever finds out that I can talk, he'll make me answer the telephones!"