

A Tale of Two Watermelons

You are probably wondering why I would speak to you this morning about two watermelons? Why are **watermelons important in church?** Well, they're not. **Ok, Amen. Thank you...** (turn and begin to walk off)

Ok, just kidding. **I'm not done with you yet.** I was giving you an example of holding an audience's attention. I got back from a beautiful copywriters conference, last weekend in Florida, and this week's sermon has a lot to do with some of the information I learned.

Andrew Davis, or Drew Davis as he called himself as Wednesday's Keynote Speaker, wrote the book, **Brandscaping**. I had seen a webinar he had done last month, in conjunction with the writing school I've been attending. I read the book and brought it with me to the seminar on Wednesday. I spotted him, and walked up to him with the book in my hand. I told him how much I enjoyed his webinar, and asked him if he'd sign his book. He did with a huge smile. He signed it **to Cynthia, Get Writing, Get Rich, Target a Melon!** And then his name. I read it, and thanked him, with a puzzled look on my face about the melon. He saw my face, laughed and said, **"I'll get it later."** Ok...

When he got up to speak to our group of over 400 people, over 50 instructors in attendance from the school I attend online, and the staff of the hotel, who were invited to listen to him, he came running up to the stage, dressed in a suit, with a massive square box, and a bright green bow tie.

(Stop and place stand, and my Mystery Box on the stand, slowly.)

It was an exciting beginning for the man who is responsible for writing much of the Muppets show on tv. He set the box down, promptly telling us **not to pay any attention to the big box** in the room. Well, of course, **all of our attention was now on the big box** sitting on a table on stage with this nerdy looking guy! He started speaking and every few minutes would say, **'stop paying attention to that Box!!** It's not ticking and it's not going to blow up. It's actually, a present for one person here in the audience, and we'll get to that a little later.

So, stop looking at that box.' (pointing out to the congregation)

I couldn't help myself from glancing at that box every few seconds! He started speaking about what it was we were all there in Florida to work on, our writing copy for businesses,

radio, and tv. I've been steadily working in my writing career now for several years, and was looking forward to speaking to some of the instructors I've been taking classes with online. Most of them were there, and we were all listening to Drew go on and on about different situations in commercial writing, and business writing, and what makes a great campaign.

He told us how YouTube videos were gathering momentum selling products, that companies are able to present with a short commercial **before starting a video** on your screen. Usually after watching 5 to 20 seconds of that commercial, you are given a button in the bottom corner that says "**Skip Ad**" and gives you the option to stop watching it, and get on to the video you initially arrived to see.

IKEA, a Swedish company, put on an ad of a young man that was standing at the sink washing dishes in his kitchen. After a few seconds, he turns to the audience and in Swedish, with English captioned subtitles says, "**Why are you still watching? You can click that button, you know, and go to your video.**" And then he goes back to washing dishes. IKEA is brightly displayed in the top left corner of this guy's kitchen while he continues to calmly wash his glassware. Every few seconds, he looks over at the camera, shakes his head, and continues to wash dishes. **This goes on for 4 minutes.** And when it was shown on Facebook live, on the bottom left corner, it shows how many viewers are online watching this guy. Over 90% of the people waiting to see **if he is going to do anything else!** Hundreds of thousands of people! Meanwhile, **IKEA won an award** for its commercial that didn't say or **do anything to promote its company**, other than display its name prominently on the screen. **Genius!**

Next, Drew goes back over to the box. He starts telling us that on Ebay and Amazon they have mystery boxes for sales. Most are available for around \$29.95, and guarantee their value for the stuff inside, to be between \$5 and \$125 for each box. So far, they've **sold over 29,000 of these boxes!** Huh? **Why?** Why would anyone buy a **box of stuff** with a promise of getting something of questionable value? **Because of the intrigue**, a person's **curiosity**, that there **may** be something of value in their box! At this point, he announces the guy in our audience that won the box. Tim Geiger! Drew opened the box in front of his rapt audience, and took out a few ordinary things, and a **Chia Pet!** Oh Yay! And a box of marker Crayons! Oh, Double Yay! A few other non-sensible things, and handed them to Tim. Drew proudly said, "another advertising coup!"

(I opened my mystery box. It was full of items for Halloween, I was doing the Trunk or Treat in our Church parking lot on Halloween night. A safe way for kids to get candy without fear of getting something laced with dangerous stuff.)

(Post Note: We had about 300 kids, and the Police came by for our Free Spiced Hot Cider and Cotton Candy Machine samples! It rained all evening from 6-8pm, but we all had a great time. We had about 15 cars lined up all lighted and decorated.)

Now- Back to the Sermon!

Drew went on to tell us that two guys in the UK, started going online and blowing stupid things up in **slow motion**. They call themselves the **Slow Mo Guys**. Drew showed us a video of a guy putting a firecracker inside the **back of a small watermelon**. The watermelon was sitting on the table next to him, he lit the fuse, and sat there as it exploded in slow motion, hitting him in the head with all the goo from the watermelon, while sitting in the chair. Duh? **Why would you sit down in a chair next to it?** Drew showed it in regular motion, and then their Slow Motion. But, beside this guy's poor judgement of sitting there next to an exploding watermelon, **the video was live**, and caught the attention of almost 20,000 people worldwide. Not bad, for the stupid, non-sensible move. **18 seconds of stupidity**. But, **it worked** and got a **lot of people's attention**.

Of course, **the USA thought they could do it better**. A man and a woman dressed in white coveralls, including hoods that made them look like spacemen, decided **to do a live show on Facebook**. They would try to find out **'how many rubber bands they would need to explode a watermelon?'**

Together, they had stretched out a rubber band with their hands, standing on either side of a kitchen table, and placed it around the middle of the watermelon, **like a belt**. We watched the counter in the bottom corner telling how many were watching it. At 90 rubber bands, **about 15 minutes** into this viewing, there were already **375,000 people watching – whatever THIS was!** At **40 minutes, 800,000 people watching worldwide**. By this time, the watermelon was standing taller, and it looked like it **had a waistline**. How many rubber bands will it take?

Finally, at **679 rubber bands, and 72 minutes later**, the watermelon launches **up off the table** and explodes splattering the two with pink splinters of goo! It had gathered over **a million people watching this live massacre of a watermelon!** Why???. **Because we need closure**. We all see something and want to know how it's going to turn out. **Finding Closure is essential** in any form of advertising. You need to **create tension**, and over time it will keep those **who are caught up** in this tension **the need to find closure**. Which is also why we have calling hours and funerals when our loved ones die. We need the closure of celebrating a life of someone we cared about, and the closure that they are gone.

Ok, Cynthia Saarie, **what does any of this have to do with church?** Well, a church is just as much a **business** as any other business. We, as a church, **are its advertisers out in the community**. We are the **billboards** for our church. We are the ones who **tell about our lives to others**. We lead those to whom we are speaking, becoming better people, living better lives, **because of our relationship with God**. **We are the tension** in our commercial, **bringing something people need into view**. We are the ones **that let people know**, that no matter what it is we went through, and are telling **them** about it, **that with Christ in our lives, we are a better person**. A person that has found **something that is worth** any amount of money we may give, our **time** that we offer, the **hours of service** we perform here, **each and every week**. That what we do for our church is **all worth while**, because of **Christ Jesus in our lives**.

EXODUS 3:14

And God said unto Moses, **"I AM THAT I AM:"** and He said, **"Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."**

So, now we go out into the world. **We tell** those that we **speak with**, that **we have become who we are today**, because of **who lives within us**. **We tell them** it is the I AM that sent us. We tell them **that we are a part of a community of faith** that has found **hope, and the curiosity** we bring into life, **is revealed** in the ways **Christ Jesus operates in this world** on a minute by minute basis, **in our's, and in everyone's lives**. That there are **no reasons** not to **move forward with our hopes and dreams for our lives**, because **we are NOT going it alone**. We have **a community of faith that works with us** and more importantly:

we have Jesus,

the Great I AM.

Jesus loved to teach us in understandable ways. And in slow motion and rubber bands... by instilling curiosity, and the desire for closure, by showing us how much fun we can have with a watermelon! AMEN!