PRAISE FOR SPEAKING BOLDLY

God’s words are already here, and your corner of the world is waiting to hear them. Now is the time for us to speak those words of Law and Gospel. Edward Grimenstein gives wonderful examples of how we can share the timeless message of God in our impatient, data-driven world. He demonstrates how to speak God’s Word courageously at home, at church, and with our neighbors. With the Gospel, we have the Good News our world is anxious to hear.

_Rev. Daniel Paavola,_
_professor of theology at Concordia University Wisconsin and author of Patience and Perfection, Our Way Home, and Grace, Faith, Scripture_

Dr. Grimenstein . . . has combined his gifts of clarity on sacred theology, teaching, and storytelling to equip us in the Church. He dissects the fact that, yes, speaking God’s Word to others is scary, but he guides us to get past ourselves as we speak to people in Christian commitment and love. There is no script nor “program,” only God’s Law and God’s Gospel as our guide as we listen enough to know where the people in our daily vocations are at. All we “do” is trust God while having the courage to speak God’s Word, not ours.

_Rev. Alfonso Espinosa, PhD,_
_author of Faith That Sees Through the Culture_

_Speaking Boldly_ is filled with biblical teaching at a very accessible level to empower Christians and congregations to testify concerning what God has revealed in His Word, especially about Jesus Christ. It is truly a practical resource that will encourage and empower the daily Christian witness of all who use it.

_Rev. Dr. Charles Gieschen,_
_academic dean and professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN_

All those faithful Christians who may be wondering or doubting the value of their witness to others should pick up this book, read [it], and work through it. The author’s premise is that God’s Word is communicated and shared not only on a Sunday when the pastor preaches from the pulpit but that it is and
should become a normal, everyday activity for all faithful Christians at home, at the workplace, at school and church. Only too often fear prevents Christians from speaking God’s Word in its proper division of Law and Gospel, or if they do, they do not know when to listen, when to speak, and when to correct or encourage. This book summons every Christian to confide in the power of God’s Word and to share it with others. The author connects truths from Scripture with real-life situations when God’s Word was spoken and made an impact. Each chapter serves as a window into the world in which we live and presents us with clues, topics, and ideas that will help us to be on the lookout for when it is the right time to listen or to speak the right words. Christians must be told to share God’s Word, but they must also be told how. Thankfully, this book does both.

Rev. Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz,
dean of graduate studies and professor of pastoral ministry and missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN
SPEAKING BOLDLY
Sharing God’s Word Every Day

EDWARD O. GRIMENSTEIN
This book is dedicated to the faculty and staff of the Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary of our sister church body, the Lutheran Church of Nigeria. May they continue to speak God’s Word every day.
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But only say the word, and my servant will be healed.

Matthew 8:8
A centurion speaking to Jesus
Dear Reader,
My name is Edward, the author of this book, and on behalf of all the people who need to hear God’s Word, I want to thank you for reading this book. There are so many of us in this world who didn’t grow up in the church. Maybe we went to Sunday School, maybe we didn’t. Maybe we had the chance to go to Vacation Bible School once a year, maybe we didn’t. Maybe we had parents who read Bible stories to us, or at least talked about faith in Christ with us, but maybe we didn’t. There are so many opportunities out there for everyday people like you to speak God’s Word every day and every chance you get.

I know you might be scared to speak God’s Word with other people. You may feel like you don’t know enough about the Bible. You may be afraid you’ll get into an argument with someone you care about. Or you may worry that someone will mock what you say about God, Jesus, and the Bible. For all of us who didn’t grow up in the church, thank you for speaking God’s Word even though you may be scared. For all of us who didn’t have parents who spoke the faith to us, thank you for not thinking you need to have a degree in biblical theology to speak that simple Gospel message to us. For all of us who never went to VBS, thank you for having the courage to speak God’s Word to us even though you may have been afraid of being mocked. I tell you the truth: your sacrifice will pay off, because God is still working wonders through His spoken Word shared by everyday people just like you!
This book is entitled *Speaking Boldly* because speaking God’s Word in this world is a very bold endeavor indeed! Speaking God’s Word is a bold thing to do because quite often unbelievers are just fine with the word this world is speaking. Jesus Christ, though, is not pleased with this fallen world. Ever since Pentecost, He has compelled His Church to open their mouths and speak His Gospel to any and every person who would listen. It is truly a gutsy thing to do. It can be terrifying, even. We may feel a knot in the pit of our stomach when we do it, and yet Christ compels us to speak. So we do. In speaking God’s Word, our head may try to intervene with, “No! Don’t do this! They may not like the Word you speak! They may not be your friend anymore after you speak!” Yet it is Christ who compels us to open our mouths, not ourselves. There may be other times when our face is flushed in a discussion, and we are ready to open our mouths and let God’s Word rush out like a wild horse because we feel so driven to speak that we cannot but do otherwise. It is Christ who opens the mouth of His people, and wonderful words can ride forth!

You don’t have to be a pastor in a pulpit to speak God’s Word. Sometimes the best word spoken happens while a mother is driving her daughter to tennis practice, when two friends are having a drink, or even when you are responding to someone’s post on social media. There are so many avenues for God’s Word to be spoken. Thank you for being willing to speak God’s Word. Truly, God can work miracles when His Word is spoken; it just needs to be shared.

In this book, you are going to meet many people who have heard God’s Word and been changed by it. The names have been changed to protect privacy, some of the scenarios have been tweaked to protect confidentiality, and other scenarios are a blend of occurrences. However, all these stories are true events in which people had the guts to just say the Word and allow God to do the work. All these stories involve everyday people, just like you, who took the time to boldly speak God’s Word in this world. Miracles can happen when God’s Word is spoken.

On behalf of all those people who were recipients of hearing that Word, I want to thank you. Thank you for taking the time to speak to us. Thank you for having the courage to speak even when you were scared. Thank you for believing God still works through His Word.
Thank you for taking the time to speak. I tell you the truth, God is still working miracles through His spoken Word; people are believing that Word and, by believing, have eternal life. Thank you for trusting God and His Word. We are so grateful you took the time to boldly speak God’s Word with us.

IN GRATITUDE FROM THE AUTHOR,
REV. DR. EDWARD O. FRIMENSTEIN,
RECIPIENT OF GOD’S WORD
And God said . . .

Genesis 1
God ordering His creation
The little boy loved to play with LEGO bricks. He didn’t care if a TV was on. He didn’t care if it was lunchtime—he just wanted to build. As a four-year-old, he was very creative. He would make multicolored, multileveled houses fit for a king. He would build cars the likes of which no one has ever seen on the road. He would make airplanes and other “flying machines” that certainly (as of yet) never graced the skies. The little boy was so proud of what he would make. After five minutes of ordering his new creation, he would grab it in both hands and run full throttle to his mom, saying, “Hey, Mom, look what I made!”

Little children do love to create. Whether it is playing with LEGO bricks, drawing the world around them (usually their own little worlds no one has ever seen before), or creating friendships between two dolls, children love to make things. They love to use their proverbial “dust of the ground” to arrange and order the world around them. All a child needs to do is pick up some building bricks, a crayon, or a doll and you will see a new world ordered from whatever they grab.

It is easy for an adult to look at such “childish” activities and say, “Oh, that’s cute,” or for a mother who receives a LEGO offering from her son to say, “Nice job,” before quickly returning to her smartphone. Sometimes though, such “child’s play” is not child’s play at all. Think of what children are doing when they are playing with building bricks, drawing a picture, or playing with dolls; they are making up the world around them. They are seeing what is at their disposal, essentially the
“stuff” around them, and they are arranging and ordering creation into something new. This is really no different than an architect who plays with adult “LEGO bricks” for a living, an artist who paints the latest masterpiece, or a therapist who counsels couples to have a better marriage. It could be argued that we humans, created in the image of God, are hardwired to order the world around us. What a child does in playing is no mere “child’s play.” If anything, it is a reflection of our origins from God Himself. Child’s play is not childish—it is theological.

**Let’s Talk**

Let’s be very clear: this book is about speaking. It is about assisting you to feel more comfortable, confident, and relaxed in speaking God’s Word to other people. Those “other” people may be your family, your friends, fellow members at church, co-workers, or even your four-year-old son. As we progress through these chapters, I am confident you will become more comfortable in speaking God’s Word with others precisely for that reason—it is God’s Word, not yours. In order to better understand God’s Word and also appreciate the Word you speak, we need to start in the beginning—literally in the beginning—and understand what God’s spoken Word accomplishes.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters.
that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:1–10)

The above is merely a section from the first chapter of Genesis. The passage continues in a similar manner. In the first two verses, God creates out of nothing the “stuff” of creation: a watery, formless mass. God arranges this world by speaking His Word. God’s vision for what this world should look like occurs by speaking. Starting in verse 3, we then hear God speaking and ordering all the “stuff.” When God speaks, His language performs an action. His words do something.

The first chapter of Genesis continues with the same pattern: God speaks and orders the creation He made, constantly shaping it into His vision through the speaking of His Word. When God spoke during creation, His speech was absolutely perfect. After every day of ordering creation, God looked back at what He arranged and pronounced that it was good. Everything worked the way it was meant to. Maybe this is why we sinful humans have trouble with our speech; we have a lot to live up to, don’t we? We aren’t even ordering creation, but we are ordering other things. Read the following “Let’s Talk” and then take a moment to share your scenarios with others or reflect upon experiences you may have had.

**LET’S TALK: At Work or School**

Have you ever been speaking with your co-worker or friend and gotten a little bit tongue-tied? I’m sure you know what this feels like—you know exactly what you want to say, and you may have even practiced what you were going to say in your
head. Believe it or not, most people in a stressful or challenging situation will actually play out little scenarios in their minds as to how they will talk in a conversation. Maybe you do this when you are proposing why you should have a pay raise, or when you need to address a challenging topic with a friend at school. What will you do? You may practice in your mind what you are going to say. You will imagine how this situation is going to play out; if they say this, you will say that. You might have the entire reality of this imaginary scenario all laid out perfectly in your brain, script on the tip of your tongue: ready, set, go! And then what happens? Well, it usually doesn’t go the way we thought. Our great comeback might get deflated by some new information, or maybe the righteous anger we felt is turned to sympathy after listening to our co-worker or friend. In short, the situation we had created and the order we had formed in our heads with our words may not be the order and the reality that took shape in the end.

When it comes to speaking—and better yet, ordering and arranging the world around us—God is the only perfect Creator. God is the only perfect arranger of His creation. We are not perfect in our speech; we are not perfect in how we think reality should be ordered. As soon as we realize that, accept that, and yes, even embrace that, we are probably going to get frustrated with ourselves. We will get frustrated for not saying the “perfect” thing; we will get upset with ourselves when reality is not “ordered” the way we think it should be. Let’s never forget there is only one God, and that is not us!

**Order vs. Disorder**

Remember our little boy with the LEGO pile? Here is what is going on as he is ordering his little creation:
The little boy knows he wants to build a house. The “stuff” is all there for it. He is sitting on the floor surrounded by building bricks. He knows he wants to build something grand, something marvelous, fit for a king. So, the little boy takes the shapeless LEGO mass and orders it. He first finds a platform where he can attach bricks for a foundation. From out of all the colored pieces, he calls upon the yellow ones to form a foundation. Any rhyme or reason? No, he just likes yellow! And the master builder continues ordering each wall with a multitude of color. In a stroke of four-year-old genius, he decides to add a window, of all things. Although it is a bit rickety, he orders the window to appear in the wall of his latest masterpiece. Out of a pile of “stuff,” out of a shapeless mass of bricks, the little boy creates a veritable masterpiece. He cradles his newfound creation, declaring, “It is good!” and runs to his mom, “Hey, Mom . . .”

Imagine the mother receiving her son’s masterpiece cradled in his hands. She loves what he made, but at the same time . . . she’s not exactly sure what it is! Hiding her obvious confusion, she deftly says to him, “Can you tell me a little more about what you made?” (And does she ever need the help because at this point she is thinking it could either be a flamingo or a three-story skyscraper that would probably never meet building code.) In the end, Mom is wrong on both counts. It is a “family car.” Silly Mom, the three wheels and wall with a window should have been a dead giveaway!

Her dear son, created in the image of God, who mimicked God the Father’s act of creating and Jesus’ act of ordering, was not as successful as God in Genesis. Why not? Why wasn’t that “family car” absolutely perfect? Why wasn’t the little boy’s ordering of the LEGO bricks good enough to meet building standards for skyscrapers and transmission standards for cars? We might be inclined to say, “Well, he’s just a little boy. Surely he couldn’t make something ‘perfect’ or ‘workable.’” What if there is more to it than that? What if there is a spiritual element to a child’s inability to order creation perfectly?
God’s Word had originally ordered creation, and it was perfect. But sadly, Eden did not that this way. After everything was made, God warned Adam:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16–17)

Adam heard God’s Word and later told his wife, Eve, what God’s law was. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did not listen for long:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Genesis 3:1–7)

God’s Word ordered the entire world. It was perfect. God’s Word ordered Adam and Eve’s bodies and soul. They were perfect. What were the first words the devil spoke to Adam and Eve? He said, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” Imagine
a father tells his child, “I don’t want you to eat a doughnut until after you have dinner tonight.” Seems clear enough, right? But then imagine what would happen if a sibling says, “Did Dad actually say you couldn’t eat a doughnut?” That word actually—what do you think it does to the word Dad originally spoke? It confuses Dad’s word, doesn’t it? God’s Word ordered creation; the devil’s word brought disorder. If the devil were a little boy playing with LEGO bricks, he would be the one to take a wheel off a car so it only had three. The devil would be the one intentionally altering a building so that the windows would fall out. The devil can’t create anything. He can only corrupt what God has made. The devil does this very often through the speaking of a word. Amazing what a word can do.

This book is all about speaking. It is about us speaking Law and Gospel with one another (these terms will be defined soon). Before doing that though, we need to understand what is happening with words. We saw what happened with words in the Garden of Eden and what happened with words after the Garden of Eden. Now that we have seen the power God’s Word has in creation and also the devilish power of wrong words, we can see what God wants to do with His Word in this life and how He uses you (yes, you!) to speak that Word. When God speaks His Word and shows us His will for this world, we call that Word the Law. The Law reveals God’s desired order for His creation: basically, He wants most cars to have four wheels and windows in buildings to not fall apart. This is what Adam and Eve were given—a perfect, working creation. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s Word, creation became twisted. There were punishments for disobeying:

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” To the woman He said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule
over you.” And to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:14–19)

The devil twisted God’s Word; he caused disorder out of order. For that, the devil was punished. God spoke His Law, His Word, and promised that the serpent would no longer have legs, would crawl on his belly, and would be consumed by death itself. We will talk more about that in a bit.

Because Eve—the woman who was created with the godly order to bear children—chose to break God’s Word, her life would be filled with the disorder she craved. Instead of her body being able to bear children, it would now be a painful calling: children would now be miscarried, and women may not even be able to conceive. Eve chose disorder over God’s order, and now she would reflect that very chaos in her flesh for generations to come. God’s Law, His Word, was clear about what would happen to her if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now she would bear that reminder in her own body.

Adam would face a similar punishment as Eve. Adam was created with the godly order to work creation and to speak the Word of God faithfully. Because Adam chose to break God’s Word, to disregard God’s Law, his life would now be filled with disorder. Instead of the ground naturally producing fruit and vegetables, it would now also bear weeds, thorns, and thistles. (Ask yourself how many times your vegetable garden just naturally produced all the vegetables you needed to eat!) Adam chose disorder over God’s order, and now he would reflect that chaos in his flesh for generations to come. Just as Adam was taken from the dust in God’s orderly way of making creation, so now would Adam return to dust. All people since Adam will die and return to dust. God’s Law, His Word, was clear about what would
happen to Adam if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now he would bear that reminder in his own body and in all bodies to come.

God’s Law, His Word, was very clear, wasn’t it? God warned Adam and Eve what would happen. The devil knew this and corrupted God’s Word. He twisted God’s Word, and because of that, every single pain and misery in this world was introduced. This world was essentially disordered by the fall into sin. Read through the next “Let’s Talk” and consider the power words have when we speak with one another.

**LET’S TALK: At Home**

Let’s be honest. When we are *outside* of the house in public, we speak differently than we do at home. Parents speak differently to their children, spouses speak differently to each other, and children speak differently to their siblings.

How do we speak differently with one another when we are in public versus when we are at home? Why do we do this?

When families are at home, it’s like the gloves come off and the real us comes out. And sometimes it’s not very pretty, is it? Spouses will snap at each other, parents will snap at their kids, and the kids will bite right back. Who knows, the dog may even get yelled at! If we are being honest, it’s probably not how we want to be speaking with our loved ones.

We realize the power words have in our lives. If we didn’t think words were powerful, then we wouldn’t change how we speak with one another whether in public or at home.
Let’s Talk

Consider these questions individually or with a group.

1. Reread Genesis 1. In this chapter, God created the heavens and the earth. Out of this mass that was “without form and void” (v. 2), God then ordered and arranged everything in creation by speaking.

   □ How many times does this chapter say, “God said”? Note in each instance exactly what it was God did by speaking.

   □ After God ordered something in creation, He proclaimed that it was good. Why do you think God would declare everything He made was good?

   □ The little boy in the story loved to build, a desire to create that was given to him by God the Great Creator. We are all made in the image of God. One of the gifts God has given us is speech. We use speech in wonderful ways every day of our lives, often in ways we never realize or consider. Think of some ways during an ordinary day in which you said something to someone else that could be pronounced good.

   □ Sometimes we hear a good word from others when they speak to us. Think of some examples in your normal day or throughout your life when someone spoke a good word to you.

2. Reread Genesis 2:16–17; 3:1–7. God told Adam not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam then told Eve. They both knew, and yet they were seduced into thinking the devil’s words were better than God’s words.