

Anecdotes by Papi

Finally A Deal With The Squirrels

Over the years, many years in fact, my inner sense of understanding convinced me to believe that I could absolutely talk to the animals. Being raised on a farm also constantly fomented the practice. You see ... when you are a caregiver of sorts to an animal you have to talk to it. It's much like talking to a baby before that baby learns how to talk to you. On our farm we had all the usual and at times some unusual animal characters and consequently I talked to all of them.

Do I still believe what some would call nonsensical? Do I still talk to the animals and invite ridicule from unbelievers? The answer is “Yes” – to both questions.

I have a friend, Dr Mahmoud Abukatteh, who is an expert in linguistics and he says “Everything has a language”; and I agree with him.

Believe me when I tell you I have personally talked to a lot of birds and cows and horses and ... you get the idea. Well the list includes squirrels also. This is a story of mixed emotion that began in tragic misunderstanding and ended in mutual respect. At times people think they are forced into unbecoming actions merely because they think those actions are their only recourse in a particular situation. In reality all course of actions have been stimulated and set in motion by the thought process and therefore limited choices are tantamount to limited thought. “As a man thinks – so is he.” There is “a way that seems right unto a man – but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Finally “every man is right in his own eyes.”

So then we are fearfully and wonderfully made according to the Psalm of David and as logical beings we are afforded various choices. Couple this aspect of understanding with the fact that we are spiritual beings as well, and suddenly our range of perceived course of action becomes attached to an unlimited and unseen supply of alternatives. These unseen choices are only concluded as such merely because the unlearned and the unwise among us fail to look for them. Beloved we

ALL have a way to escape untoward activities and practices if we just look for the door of escape.

In the year 2001 according to the Gregorian Calendar I began building my dear wife a home. This is the one she had waited 28 years for. She and I had spent all our early years of marriage endeavoring to preach the gospel and nearly every cent we made was placed directly back into the ministry. One day I said I am going to work to get enough money to build my wife a house; I worked four years and when I thought I had enough funds I quit! One day I came home and told my wife I am going to now build you a house; the next day I began. Now we are back to the year 2001 with apologies for the digression. The house was built by a single individual working long and hard hours for almost four years. Ninety-eight per cent of the entire work was done solitarily, And

Oh ... you are wondering about the squirrels? Very well, here is the true account. I have a lone apple tree directly out my front door which I planted several years ago and so it is well into fruit production. Did I mention also that I live in the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains in a heavily wooded area? That's why we have so many squirrels; hundreds of them right out the front door. They have multiplied so profusely due to the fact that all their natural predators are displaced because of people building in the area.

My apple tree became "The Place" for squirrels to raid. I watched them while I built my house. I talked and talked with them and it did no good; I told them I didn't mind sharing but they insisted on destroying the entire crop. Each visitor would take a bite out of several little green apples just to let them fall to the ground before taking a single apple with which to escape into the forest. When any little marauder returned or showed up for the first time do you think they would dare choose an apple on the ground? No it never happened. Furthermore, it seems that every squirrel for miles around knew precisely where Papi's apple tree was located.

I borrowed a little 22 caliber rifle and began shooting squirrels out of "MY" apple tree! My personal policy was not to shoot a single squirrel *unless* he was in "MY" apple tree. In addition to talking to animals I have developed a habit of counting; I constantly count everything. So yes ... I did count the number of dead squirrels. There was a temporary board on my unfinished stairway and like the gunfighter of old that notched each kill just for the record ... my carpenter's pencil made each calculating mark on that board. As I have mentioned above; this story included tragedy, and that the initial summations of man invariably lead to ways

of death. The year was 2002 – the count was 23 – the apple harvest was zero! Talk of insult to injury; I killed 23 squirrels and did not get a single apple to eat.

Please remember beloved this is a very true story told in the fear of the Almighty and before the Almighty. With the exception of a single minor detail; just place a huge ditto mark for the following year 2003. The same apple tree – the same solitary project – the same count – the same result – tells the story! That’s right I had again killed 23 squirrels but I did get ONE apple. There is even an admission of shame as to how I got that apple but none the less true.

I had been eyeing the very last apple on the tree so that when it ripened I could at least get ONE apple. Suddenly I peer outdoors and there is a squirrel with “MY” apple going up the closest tree to the apple tree which is a sizable sweet gum tree. I shot the squirrel, went and got the apple, washed it off and ate it. That was the apple harvest of the year 2003. Yes ... that’s precisely what happened!

The following year I sat on my front porch and observed the apple blossoms on that solitary tree and began to seek an alternative to my perceived dilemma. I began to talk to the ONE and ONLY CREATOR. I said “Master I don’t want to kill all these squirrels out here, but they won’t listen to me and they will not just share my apples, they want all of them.” “I need you to talk with them for me – I want to make a deal with the squirrels by the forces that control all things in the universe.” My heart had within it a broken spirit and I could hardly speak before this all knowing, all caring Father of mine and the remorse was greater than any could imagine; with fear and trembling in my soul I finished talking to “Avinu” which means “Our Father.” I had given up hunting and killing years ago and I no longer found any pleasure in what was happening.

Hallelujah! You may have guessed by now God answered my supplication made unto him. Because of their greed the Almighty didn’t allow a single squirrel to have a single apple that year. You may say it is because you killed them all and you would be wrong. I watched every squirrel that played in my front yard that year from spring until winter. There were so many squirrels I have counted five on a single log. They chased one another, hid their acorns and hickory nuts in various places out there, even under the apple tree, and not a single squirrel went into that tree. Oh the harvest for me was five – five gallon buckets full. Twenty five gallons of apples was all that I needed. I didn’t take them all: the birds got some; the deer and the rabbits all had their fill; the insects even shared the feast at Papi’s apple tree. We have pictures of deer eating apples right off the tree. Matter of fact I saw five deer eating apples at the same time. Not one single squirrel ate an apple that year.

The greatness of communication is so phenomenally pure that it provides the way unto mutual respect that in turn leads to the perfect measure of love. We can communicate because we have a language to do so; it is just that we chose to speak the wrong words at times and refuse to learn other words that are designed to change the outcome of any given discourse.

Papi 126 It is not the variances of language or dialect in communication that presents the root problem; it is the **words** themselves that **we choose to use**.

The greatest of these words are words of faith spoken directly to the source of ALL communication and the results of taking the time to do so are beyond carnal comprehension.

You see ... since that tragic time I have actually called squirrels down out of the trees around my home just so my grandbaby could see them. That's what I told them and they came. Yes this is all very true and part of the same story. The apple tree no longer belongs to me it belongs to my Father and I am learning to be a good steward – we all enjoy the fruit – squirrels included.

May the Lord bless you with the revelation to free your soul to find greater words and greater faith to practice even greater love. Amen

Papi
April 3, 2008

Anecdotes by Papi