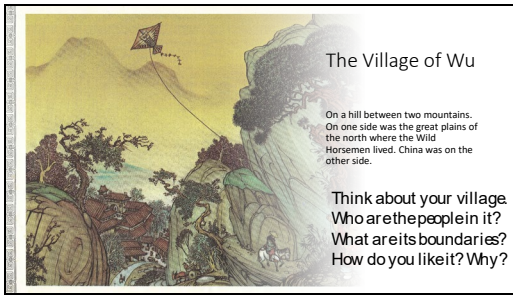


Slide 1



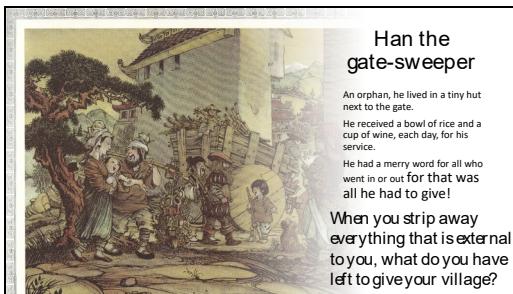
Written by Jay Williams
Illustrated by Mercer Mayer
Four Winds Press, New York
(Out of print.)

Slide 2



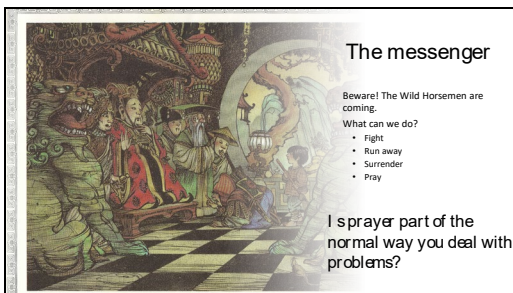
We each live in our own village. Sometimes it is a village of our own making. Sometimes it is a village created for us. Sometimes it is supportive of us and sometimes it drains our energies. What is yours like?

Slide 3




Remember the story of the Widow's Mite where the Gospel says she gave from her all. No matter what we have, we can maintain a psychological distance from our "things" and give from our all too, from our very selves. Or, we can let our things hide who we are.

Slide 4



The options presented here are as singular choices. (Note that negotiate is not on the list.) Maybe the first three choices can't be combined with each other, but prayer can always be, and should be, combined with any of the other choices.

Slide 5



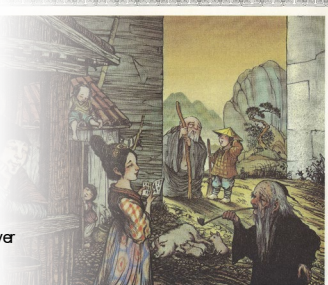
They chose to pray

They prayed to the Great Cloud Dragon for help.

When you pray, is your attitude to sit back and wait for God to take action?

Because their choice of praying was seen as one choice from among several, they simply waited for the Dragon to take action for them, without doing anything on their own. A proper pray attitude, in this type of situation, should be to pray for help in making a choice and then, while living out the choice, continually praying for strength and wisdom to guide our actions. How have you dealt with similar problems?

Slide 6




A Small Fat Man shows up

He tells Han he's a dragon
Han says he doesn't look like a dragon
He asks Han if he's ever seen a dragon
Well then...?

Have you ever seen a dragon? Have you ever seen God?

If you haven't read the book "Where Love is, God Is", by Leo Tolstoy, I highly recommend it. It also exists in children's videos entitled "Martin the Cobbler." As the story goes, Martin hears the voice of God, in his sleep, saying "I will come and visit you tomorrow." The rest of the story is about his watching out the window for God.

Slide 7




Visiting the Counsel

Han takes the fat man to the Mandarin and his counselors and introduces him as the dragon..
Don't be ridiculous. He's a fat man who is tracking dirt on my fine carpets.
Everybody knows what a dragon looks like; They look like mandarins.

What is your preconceived notion of what God is like?

If we create an image of God, in our minds, it's like putting him in a box of our own creation. That box oftentimes holds an image of God who looks like ourselves. But, we can only really come to know God by opening ourselves to experiencing him as he chooses to reveal himself to us. How are you blocking his ability to reveal himself to you.

Slide 8




The Councilors weigh in

The Captain of the Army said dragons look like captains of the army.
 The Leader of the Merchants said they look like merchants.
 The Chief of the Workmen said they look like workmen.
 The Wisest of the Wise Men said they look like wise men.

What do you think?
 Are you capable of letting God be who he is?

Sometimes our image of God might be based on our personality traits. A person who needs structure, might think of God a rule giver. A person who highly prizes information might think of God as the bearer of truth. A person who finds life oppressive might think of God as a punisher. A person who needs to be successful, might think of God as judgmental. What are your primary personality traits? How might they affect your image of God?

Slide 9




The Attack

Dragon: If you will treat me with courtesy, I will save the city. Give me something to eat and something to drink and speak to me politely.
 Mandarin: You are not a dragon! Everyone can see that you are a dusty old wanderer. We have no time to give you free meals or talk politely. Get out of the way.

What would be the probable result of failing to notice God's presence in your life?

When you think about it, what enemies are trying to attack you? How do you deal with those attacks? Would God's palpable presence in your life help?

Slide 10




Cowering in Fear

Han: I don't think we have much time. The enemy will be here soon. I don't know whether you are a dragon or not, but if you are hungry and thirsty, please do me the honor of coming into my humble house.
 Dragon: I don't think much of the people of Wu, but for your sake I will save the city.

Do you treat others the way you would treat Jesus if he were in your presence?

Once again, we see Han giving from his substance. He reminds me of the Story of the Widows Mite (Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4).

Slide 11




The Rout

The little fat man puffed out his cheeks. He blew a long breath. The sky grew dark and lightning sizzled from the clouds to the earth. A great wind arose. It caught the Wild Horsemen and blew them far and wide. Those who escaped, turned and galloped madly away through the storm.

What is attacking you that you would like to have routed away?

This is the result of living the law of love. This is not about knowing the law of love (Mk 12:28-34 and Mt 22:34-40) but about living it (Mt 25:40). How are you at living it?

Slide 12




What a Dragon Looks Like

He was more beautiful and more frightening than anything Han had ever seen.

Are you brave enough to experience God as he truly is?

This is using “frightening” in the sense that the Bible uses “fear of God”. It means overwhelmed by awe. In one sense it is wonderful (awesome) in another sense it is terrifying (awful). Can you accept both?

Slide 13



Han tells the Mandarin

Mandarin: Best of all, we know what a dragon looks like. He looks like a small, fat, bald, old man.

Why did the Mandarin still not know what a dragon looks like, whereas Han did?

The answer to the question on this slide is key.