

HUMOR FOR PREACHING, MINISTRY AND THE SPIRITUAL PATH©

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TOP FIVE MYTHS ABOUT HUMOR AND RELIGION

1 BIBLE ISN'T FUNNY

Have you read it? Try Genesis 18:11, Acts 29:9 (KJV), or 1 Samuel 5:9 (KJV)

2 GOD DOESN'T LAUGH

Perception versus reality: "God is a comedian playing to an audience who is afraid to laugh." -Voltaire

3 JESUS DIDN'T LAUGH

Jesus was a great comedian who used comedic tools like irony and exaggeration. Much of the humor is contextual. Note: the Gnostic Gospels talk about "the savior laughing."

4 HUMOR IS DANGEROUS OR BLASPHEMOUS

According to whom? Perhaps bigger concern is pride? Consider the Sacred Clowns of the Native Americans. Humor can be dangerous if misused, but so can sanctity.

5 THIS IS JUST SOME NEW AGE FAD

First examples of humor and religion 3500 years ago with Acadian myth of Adapa; examples also found with Mesopotamians, Greeks and the Egyptians who had a creation myth where God laughed the human spirit into creation. Most every major world religious tradition honors humor (Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Native cultures)

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF STANDUP COMEDY FOR MINISTERS

1-EDIT

2-USE HOOKS (short pithy statements of images that people remember)

3-GET CREATIVE...exaggeration, irony

4- LEARN TO LOOK FOR MATERIAL

5-RECORD YOUR WORK AND LISTEN TO IT

6-USE CALL BACKS (set a hook in the beginning and return to it)

7-HOLD—SILENCE—IT'S A CONVERSATION, ALLOW THEM TIME TO HEAR

8-THREE'S

9-DETAIL IS FUNNIER

10-IMPROV—BE **PRESENT** WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU

COOL HUMOR LINKS

Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor www.aath.org
Comedy Cures www.ComedyCures.org
Clowns without Borders www.clownswithoutborders.org
Big Apple Circus Pediatric Clowns
<http://www.bigapplecircus.org/community/clown-care.aspx>
Patch Adams and the Gesundheit Institute www.patchadams.org
Rabbi Bob Alper, Rabbi and standup comedian www.BobAlper.com
Muslim Comics Azhar Usman, Mo Ahmer, Preacher Moss
www.AllahMadeMeFunny.com

PRAYER

*Help me to laugh
with so much heart
I shake the trees
and tremble the quiet
pools. Surprise
the old carp
and warblers
with my joy.
Multiply my delights
till they surround me like an echo
revolving in a gorge.*

-Katherine Mosby, The Book of Uncommon Prayer

QUOTES

*“Comedy bears the great secret of redemption.”
–Umberto Ecco, In the Name of the Rose*

*“God is a comedian playing to an audience that is afraid to laugh.”
–Voltaire*

*“Humor is not a trick, not jokes. Humor is a presence in the world,
like grace, and shines on everyone.”
–Garrison Keillor*

*“There are many things that even the wise fail to do,
While the fool hits the point.
Unexpectedly discovering the way to life in the midst of death,
He bursts out in hearty laughter.”
–Sengai, Zen Master*

‘Even if nothing else today has any future, our laughter may yet have a future.’
-Nietzsche

“The widespread failure to recognize and to appreciate the humor of Christ is one of the most amazing aspects of the era named for him.”
-Elton Trueblood

“A sense of humor is the saving grace that allows life to emerge from ashes.”
-Doris Donnelly

“Comedy is not an escape, not from truth but from despair: a narrow escape into faith.”
-Christopher Fry

*“Is it possible, I wonder, to say that it is only when you hear the Gospel as a wild and marvelous joke that you really hear it at all?
Heard as anything else, the Gospel is the church’s thing, the preacher’s thing, the lecturer’s thing.
Heard as a joke—high and unbidden and ringing with laughter—it can only be God’s thing.”*
-Frederick Buechner

“Keep away from the wisdom that does not cry, the philosophy that does not laugh, and the greatness that does not bow before children.”
-Kahlil Gibran

The Creator made humans able to walk and talk, to see and hear...to do everything. But the Creator wasn’t satisfied. Finally, the Creator made humans laugh, and when they laughed and laughed, the Creator said, “Now you are fit to live.”
-Traditional Apache Story

“Faith without laughter leads to dogma, and laughter without faith leads to despair.”
-Conrad Hyers, Theologian

"Laughter is like changing a baby's diaper--it doesn't permanently solve any problems, but it makes things more tolerable for a while."
-Anonymous

“Humor saves us from trying to be angels.”
-Harvey Cox, Professor, Harvard Divinity School

“Life is too important a thing to ever talk seriously about it.”
-Oscar Wilde, Playwright

“Life is serious all the time, but living cannot be. You may have all the solemnity you wish in your neckties, but in anything important (such as sex, death, and religion), you must have mirth or you will have madness.”

-G.K. Chesterton

George Burns on how to give a good sermon:

“First you need a brilliant introduction.

Second, you should have a dynamic conclusion.

Third, be sure that your introduction and conclusion are not that far apart.”

“If you can laugh at it, you can live through it.”

-Bill Cosby

SCRIPTURES OF JOY AND LAUGHTER

*Philippians 4:4, 7 “**Rejoice** in the Lord always; again, I will say **Rejoice**.”*

*John 15:11 “These things I have spoken to you, that **My joy** may be in you, and that **your joy** may be full.”*

*Psalm 43:5 “...He will make **me smile** again for he is my God!”*

*Zephaniah 3:17-18 “...[T]he Lord will **rejoice** over you in **great gladness**; he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.”*

*Proverbs 17:22 “A **cheerful heart** is good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones...”*

*Luke 6:21 “Happy are you who weep now; **you shall laugh**.”*

*Psalm 188:24 “This is the day that the Lord has made. We will **rejoice** and be glad in it.”*

*Psalm 69:32 “...All who seek for God shall live **in joy**.”*

Proverbs 15: 13 “A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.”

*Ecclesiastes 3:1 “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...a time to weep, and **a time to laugh**, a time to mourn, and a time to dance...”*

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A NEW LOOK AT THE GOOD SAMARITAN

LUKE 10:30-37

AND JESUS ANSWERED SAYING, A CERTAIN MAN WENT DOWN FROM _____ (modern town) AND FELL AMONG THIEVES, WHO STRIPPED HIM OF HIS _____ (nicest item of clothing/jewelry you can think of) AND WOUNDED HIM AND THEN DEPARTED, LEAVING HIM HALF DEAD.

AND BY CHANCE THERE CAME DOWN A CERTAIN _____ (title for a modern religious leader) THAT WAY. AND WHEN SHE SAW HIM, SHE SIMPLY PASSED BY ON THE OTHER SIDE.

AND LIKEWISE A _____ (high level corporate title) CAME AND LOOKED ON HIM, AND PASSED BY ON THE OTHER SIDE.

BUT A CERTAIN _____ (a person or persons who are disliked), AS HE JOURNEYED, CAME WHERE HE WAS AND WHEN HE SAW HIM, HE HAD COMPASSION ON HIM.

AND HE WENT TO HIM, AND BOUND UP HIS WOUNDS, POURING IN _____ (name of a drug store first aid item), AND SET HIM ON HIS OWN _____ (modern mode of transportation), AND BROUGHT HIM TO A _____ (name of a modern hotel), AND TOOK CARE OF HIM.

AND THE NEXT DAY WHEN HE DEPARTED, HE TOOK OUT _____ (method of payment), AND GAVE IT TO THE HOST, AND SAID UNTO HIM, _____ (some modern hip slang greeting) TAKE CARE OF HIM; AND IF YOU SPEND MORE THAN I HAVE GIVEN YOU, WHEN I COME AGAIN, I WILL REPAY YOU.