

November 7, 2021

The View

"Sirs, we wish to see Jesus." – John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate located near the entrance.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible classes for all ages

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today

Scott Gardner

Why I Choose Jesus

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 1:30 PM in room 15/16 – Hebrews

Bible Class @ 5 PM – A Study of Prayer (Auditorium)

Young People's Class, 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey's home

Middle school class: monthly

Contact Dan Stegall at 818- 209-9810)

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: A Study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians

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***"It's not what you gather,
but what you scatter that tells
what kind of life you have lived "***

– Helen R. Walton

Influence

BY DEE BOWMAN (ORIGINALLY TITLED; "A LITTLE MAY GO A LONG WAY")

A young man preached his heart out. He was barely 23 years old and this was his first gospel meeting. How his heart did beat when he received the invitation to come and preach for the small group of brethren in this little community. Visions of huge crowds, high excitement, lots of responses filled his head as he contemplated the coming event. When the time came he was almost out of breath with excitement.

Although the crowds were fair, there was seemingly very little excitement during the meeting. Brethren listened attentively, but their reaction was basically one of quiet politeness. He preached his heart out for two weeks.

When the meeting was concluded, one person—a little girl 12 years old—obeyed the gospel. He was discouraged, disappointed.

Before returning home, he called together the Elders of the little congregation and apologized to them.

"I guess I'm not as far along as I thought I was," he said, "I'm sorry for the fact that only one person responded to the invitation." "I'll try and do better the next time—that is if there is a next time," he said. The Elders sought in vain to console him as he went on his way.

Years passed. The little girl grew up. She married a fine Christian man. To this union was born five sons. All five of the sons became gospel preachers. Through their efforts thousands of people learned about Jesus and obeyed the gospel.

All this, because of the effort of one young, inexperienced gospel preacher.

Influence is interesting. You never know how much you have or what that influence may accomplish. Even people who think themselves to have very little of it have been known to have a profound effect on the lives of others. And influences are not always huge, either. Lots of times it's little acts that impress us. And many times we don't even realize our influence is being felt.

One thing is certain: we need to learn that there's power in influence — power for good, power for evil. You have such power. So do I. For instance, if you're an older person, chances are younger people

are watching you and some of them are apt to follow your ex-ample, whether you know it or not. If you are younger, there are still kids who are younger still who may well be patterning their lives after you. So it's important to "watch out where you're going," as my Dad used to say. How sad it would be to lead some person down the wrong path.

Paul, in I Corinthians 11:1, said, "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*" The best following you will ever do is following Christ. And the best example you can possibly be is one where Christ is the dominant feature in your life. Lead yourself well and you'll lead others well.

And you don't have to be a gospel preacher to preach the gospel. All you need is a love for the souls of men, coupled with a burning desire to make the words of Jesus known. We need to be so fascinated by the gospel that we can hardly keep from telling

people about it. Further, that gospel should have such an effect on us personally that it's obvious to all that we belong to the Lord, and that He alone guides our footsteps.

"And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...therefore they that were scattered abroad went every-where preaching the word" (Acts 8). I fear the gospel message doesn't influence us like it did them. One small rejection and we're apt to quit. And our folding up in our obligation may well cause someone else to do so as well. We can do better. We must do better. We have to be like the early saints and keep on teaching.

How's our influence for good? Do others see Jesus living in us? Do they see the joy we have in seeking and serving Him? Do we shrink back at the slightest set-back? We may not know how much influence we're having, but we do know that it's right to keep on trying. It might turn out like the young preacher, who knows?

[I sure do miss our brother Bowman! "*If you miss heaven, you miss all there is!*" dp]

"The little girl grew up. She married a fine Christian man. To this union was born five sons. All five of the sons became gospel preachers. Through their efforts thousands of people learned about Jesus and obeyed the gospel."

The Place of Humor in the Normalization of Sin

By David Posey

Jesus had a sense of humor. *“Before you take that speck out of someone’s eye get the huge log out of your own eye”* (Matthew 7:3-5). Just thinking about that makes me laugh. It’s “biting” humor but it’s still humor. You can find several instances of humor in Jesus’ teaching, if you dare look for it. I love humor and I love to be around people who have a sense of humor. Generally, people who don’t have a sense of humor take themselves way too seriously (which is annoying and kind of sad). Solomon said, *“there is a time to weep and a time to laugh”* (Ecclesiastes 3:4) and Proverbs 17:22 says, *“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”*

Having said all that, there is a serious downside to some humor or, to be more exact, the way humor has shaped society. If you look at the lifestyles that have been normalized in our society in the last fifty years look no further than that 19 to 90 inch screen you have been looking at since you were two years old. TV and its cousins, media of all kinds, have been instrumental in shaping the thinking of the current American culture. And the most insidious way this has happened is through humor.

When we laugh at something that we see or hear, we think we are not taking it seriously and so we don’t tend to analyze what we are laughing at. Here’s a harmless example: *“The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.”* (Steven Wright). Now that’s funny; but after I laugh I say to myself, “wait. . .there’s a kernel of truth there.” In fact, the most successful comedians find humor in reality. They will take something from our common experience and tweak it or exaggerate it and we laugh because it’s true — it touches something that we have experienced in some way. The closer the joke connects with something we have experienced, the funnier it is.

A humorous comment sometimes causes us to think seriously. For example, look again at Steven Wright’s line, *“the problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.”* On further examination, we realize — as silly as it sounds on the surface — that it’s true. We don’t have control over the genes we inherited from our “gene pool.” And it can be serious. One may have a propensity toward alcoholism and not know it. If he has that gene, a consumption of a small amount of alcohol is more likely to cause him to be an alcoholic than someone else who drinks the same amount. Of course, we know there are other genes that may, unknowingly, cause problems for us. The “gene pool has no lifeguard” is funny, until we stop and think about the implications of it.

More ominously, we may laugh at something that is humorous but is actually risqué and ungodly. Do we ever laugh with our hands over our mouths at sexual innuendo? I’m no expert, but it seems that humor has been the vehicle to bring about a change in societal norms perhaps more than anything else. We have to admit the normalization of fornication (sex outside marriage) and

homosexual lifestyles is complete. Yet, it wasn’t because a popular politician or famous orator got up on a stage 60 years ago and made an argument for “free sex” (although, that was definitely a “thing” among the bohemian, beatnik and hippie crowd; but most people didn’t take them seriously).

How did it get to where we are today? Again, I’m not a social scientist, but look no further than stand-up comedy, movies and situation comedies (“sitcoms”). In the early 1950s, Desi and Lucy, who were actually married in real life, had twin beds on their sitcom, “I Love Lucy.” So did Dick Van Dyke and Mary Tyler Moore on the Dick Van Dyke Show. Clearly, when it comes to TV, most morality was in black and white (see The Andy Griffith Show, etc.).

It wasn’t long until producers began to include the implication of sex outside marriage (the Bible calls it *porneia* — “fornication”) in their films — in living color. TV was not far behind; it would be hard to find a TV series that didn’t contain that element in its storylines. In movies, I don’t need to tell you that that boat has sailed long ago and has moved from “implied” to “explicit” (to get a sense of the extent of this, read some of the reviews of PG-13 and R-rated movies on pluggedin.com).

The first homosexual character on a popular television show was Billy Crystal’s character, Jodie, on the primetime hit sitcom Soap that aired from 1977 to 1981 (in color). In 2013, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) issued a report boasting that “TV hasn’t merely reflected the changes in social attitudes; it has also had an important role in *bringing them about.*” Of course, standup comedians used sexual and homosexual humor long before that, albeit in a less than politically correct form. But since then, it’s rare to find a TV show, sitcom or movie, that doesn’t feature a some gay content. A full quarter of the content of the popular *Glee* TV show which aired a few years ago was homosexual. It even made its way into *Downton Abbey*. Did we blush?? (Jeremiah 6:15). Gay content is appearing regularly on commercials now (we record any shows we want to watch and zoom through the commercials; that helps a little).

My point is that humor has been one *sneaky* way that a patently immoral worldview has wiggled its way into our culture and into our homes. Unfortunately, it has become “acceptable” even among some members of the church. And it’s interesting that some Christians are mortified and feign shock at homosexual material in the media when characters on popular shows have been involved in affairs outside marriage for years. Did we blush at that? Or is heterosexual fornication a “lesser sin” in our minds than homosexuality? You won’t get that from the Bible. And let’s not kid ourselves; some young people are noticing this inconsistency in our view of sin.