



WAS JESUS FUNNY?

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Good to see y'all. Uh, we are doing a series Religion Saves and Nine Other Misconceptions. Tonight, We're doing humor. Uh, it's gonna be fun. And, uh, I'll tell you how we ended up with this series. Normally we go right through books of the Bible, but as I was teaching through First Corinthians a while back, uh, I realized that that church had written a lot of questions to their Pastor Paul. And then his letter was, uh, a series of answers to their questions. So I thought, well, wouldn't it be fun to do that in our own days? So we posted it on the website. We got 893 questions. Uh, most of them were terrible, some were pretty good. Um, we got five and a half thousand comments. About half of them were, no, it's not nice. Don't say that. Uh, and then, uh, we got 343,000 votes and we've taken the top nine questions and we're doing them as this, uh, religion saves series. Up until Easter last week, we dealt with, uh, the number nine question birth control, where I showed you the, uh, Richard Simmons photo. If you don't remember, um, that was the highlight. This week, uh, we're doing question number eight, which is humor. Uh, next week we'll do question number seven, which is predestination. Uh, why does God choose some people for heaven and not others? Duck duck dam, uh, kind of, uh, game that Calvinists love to play. Uh, additionally, the following week we'll do question number six, which was sort of a grab bag question for me. What part of Christianity do I still find most difficult to believe after that question? Number five, which is sexual sin. How do you overcome sexual sin? Question number four, faith and works. Uh, do we save ourselves? Does God save us? Do we work together with God? How does that work after that Question Number three, we'll deal with dating and courting and doting all of those, uh, together. And then number two, the emerging church. And question number one will be, uh, worship and the regulative principle. Uh, as always, we're audio and video capturing everything. It's all online for free, but you get what you pay for. You could find it at, uh, that was supposed to be funny. You guys are be rough crowded here. This is gonna go marshall church.org, um, iTunes, YouTube has it all. You can go to MySpace, Facebook blast away comments if you want a place to comment and discuss the sermon. And, uh, one other thing I'll make note of at our 8:30 PM service, the final service of the day, we allow people who come to do text message questions last week, we did it for the first time, it went well. So we've, uh, taken that, put the, uh, answers to the questions and I have no idea what's coming. Just answer 'em on the fly after six, seven hours of preaching. So it gets a little exciting. We put those online as well. And you can find those@marshallchurch.org and at uh, at YouTube. So, uh, that being said, we'll get to the question in just a moment, but I'll share with you tonight's lovely t-shirt. Uh, it was sent to me by a podcaster. It says, God, save me from your followers. So this is a good one. I like this one a lot People send me shirts, I get 'em from all over the world. If you send one, uh, make it a large not on the pastel color. And I don't wear used clothing, that's gross. So, uh, it's vintage. No, it's you somebody else sweated in it. That's weird. I won't do that. Uh, so I'll go ahead and pray and, uh, we'll get to work on tonight's question. Good to have you all with us. And uh, I'm looking forward to it. Father God, I thank you that I get to teach the Bible. I thank you because I have as much or more freedom and as much or more fun than any other preacher in the world. Uh, God, as we study tonight, we come acknowledging we are sinners and as sinners we do some silly things. We believe and say some silly things. And God, I pray by your grace we would not overlook all of the rich comedic material in our lives. That we'd learn to laugh with you and laugh at ourselves, grateful that our righteousness is a gift from Jesus. And as a result, we should take him seriously, but not ourselves. So God, as we study, we ask for your Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us as we ask for a good sense of humor. In Jesus name. Amen. Well, here's the question that, uh, people voted on. Uh, why do you meaning me? You'll notice this is all very personal. Apparently some people got their feelings hurt. I always say there's two kind of people, people that have been offended by me and people that don't listen to me. Uh, those are the two categories. Why do you make jokes? Well, cuz it's funny about Mormon missionaries, uh, homosexuals, trench coat wears, which if you put those together, that would be funny. Like a gay trench coat wearing Mormon kid on a bike. That would be hilarious. Uh, single men. Well, why not? They're so silly. Uh, vegans emo kids and then expect these groups to come to know God in the same sermon. Well, the truth is, we are trying to put the fun back into fundamentalism. That is our secondary mission in addition to pointing to Jesus. So I do make fun of all kinds of people. I make fun of rappers with grills and spinner rims and girlfriends in clear heels who

make their living \$1 bill at a time. I make fun of indie rockers who, uh, drive little mopeds and wear all black and smoke American spirit cigarettes and wear those little pants with the, the the, the really close brought in pegged legs, like the eighties girl pants. You guys are so cute. Um, I make fun of homeschoolers. I make fun of homeschool moms who wear denim jumpers and uh, and it's like a uniform. I also make fun of public schoolers and that's the easiest cuz they can't spell so they won't blog about it. Um, I make fun of all kinds. I make fun of Calvinists, I make fun of Armenians. I also like to make fun of vegans. But vegans take it very seriously every time I promote bacon, which I do often cuz I love bacon. Bacon is wonderful. And uh, and then the vegans get really upset. Like I had a guy not too long ago to me say, you cannot promote bacon. I said, why not? He said, you will die if you eat bacon. I said, I know I will die and go to heaven full of bacon. That's awesome. What's wrong with that? I believe in the resurrection of the dead. I'll be fine. Uh, so, uh, we do have a lot of fun and of course we make fun of Mormons. How can you not make fun of a religion that when you get saved they give you under Britches? I mean, that's funny. I tried so hard this week online to order a pair of Mormon Sacred under Britches. They're like a onesie with a trap door. They're awesome. I'm not even making this up. Um, but they're so serious about it. You can't find a pair. So I was unable to locate a pair. I was gonna wear them over my jeans and t-shirt. And if you can, I mean we tried and you need like a special card to get 'em from the temple. And we tried all kind of stuff. No success. If you have one, send it to me and maybe I could use it in the future sermon. Thank you Jesus. Uh, the question is, is it biblical? Does the Bible have any humorous parts? Is there any comedy in there? I'll, I'll start by quoting the a dictionary of biblical imagery. Uh, it's a great theological resource. It says this, the Bible, the Bible is predominantly a serious rather than a funny book. Yet it would distort the Bible to suppress the humor that is present arranged on a continuum that ranges from the least intellectual think slapstick humor, three stooges, Bevis and Butthead, Johnny Knoxville or not. But those are examples to the most intellectual irony and wordplay, right? That would be British comedy. Somebody like I don't get British comedy. That's cuz apparently they're very smart and subtle. Uh, think, uh, Stephen Colbert. Think John Stewart. Little more thoughtful comedy. We could say that the humor of the Bible tends toward the subtle. Uh, it goes on to say that the whole Bible is in one sense a comical, uh, arrangement. The overall plot of the Bible is a U-shape comic plot. The action begins with a perfect world inhabited by perfect people. It descends into the misery of fallen history and ends with a new world of total happiness and the conquest of evil. The book of Revelation is the story of the happy ending par excellence as a conquering hero. That's Jesus defeats evil, marries a bride. That's the church and lives happily ever after in a palace glittering with jewels. The Bible uses the word laugh, laughter, and derivatives thereof more than 200 times and uses the word joy and derivatives thereof more than 40 times. And what has happened sadly, is that the Bible has been too often handled by religious people who take thick coats of varnish and lacquer over the Bible and take out all of the humanity and the silly stories of what people, sinners do like us on the earth. And the result is that, uh, Ecclesiastes three, four is overlooked, which says there is a time to laugh, that there is a time to laugh. And the Bible is filled with points at which we must laugh. The Bible includes comedy forms such as situational comedy. We'll deal with these tonight. Satire, sarcasm, irony and whole books of the Bible, such as Amos are funny. They're, they're comedic in nature. Very little is written on this theologically. Uh, one pastor named Douglas Wilson is written an interesting book called The Serrated Edge. I think it's a Trinitarian defensive sky Laking is what he calls the subtitle. And here's what he says, that that usually biblical and Christian comedy attacks religious people. Cuz here's the problem with religious people. They're just too serious. They're just burrowed brow, pointy finger, all dressed up, judgmental. They're just no fun at all. And so the best thing you could do is make fun of them because they're a joke and they don't know that, but they're hilarious. And making fun of them does two things. It helps them come to repentance seeing that they're a joke. And it helps other people who would follow them because they're so convincing, because they're so committed to not follow in their foolish lifestyle. So he says, rightly the prophet Jeremiah attacked idolaters. The Lord Jesus attacked the self-righteous Pharisees. The Apostle Paul attacked the Judaizers Ires attacked the Gnostics and Luther attacked the pap. We'll start with the Old Testament. Does the Bible have any humor in it or is that just not appropriate for religion? Well start in Genesis, the Book of Beginnings where all things be begin, including good comedy. And the book

starts, uh, fairly early on with a guy marrying his sister, uh, which is really funny unless you're from Kentucky and then it's a little too close to home, but it is kind of peculiar and then it moves along. God floods the earth, kills everyone except for a family headed by a man named Noah. They climb into an ark upon exiting New York and Genesis nine, there's this really funny little story where Noah gets drunk and passes out naked in his tent. I mean, the whole book is a hillbilly redneck saga. Par Exelon. It's like all of Genesis takes place in a trailer park. It's absolutely mesmerizing. I preached the book a while back if you were here, you know, it's filled with redneck comedy and uh, and Noah gets drunk, passes out naked in his tent like a hillbilly redneck on vacation. And when I see it, I see a guy not with a tent, but blue tarps. I see a guy in, uh, swim trunks, in cowboy boots, drunk on moonshine with a John Deere cap sitting around playing Texas Holden with his uncle daddy eating hot pockets. That's just how I see it. Or like that, that's kinda how I see Noah. That's kind of how I see Noah. It is kind of funny that after God kills everyone, the one righteous guy gets drunk, passes out naked in his tent, obviously with a NASCAR tank top on. Moving right along through Genesis. We then get to a guy named Jacob. His name means trickster. He's a con man. And so he goes to this well in Genesis 25. And there is a beautiful young lady named Rachel. He's really interested in her. So he does this Herculean feat taking the lid off of the well, so she could have water. Normally this would take a whole host of men, but he sort of shows up, stretches out, gets on his tank top, you know, oils himself up like a bodybuilder. Here you go, baby. Fresh water lets her into the well. And then he rushes up and kisses her like he just won the next tail cup. And he's on the stage with the trophy girl so that she brings him home to meet her daddy, who is named Laban. And this guy is an absolute varsity con man. And so much of the ensuing chapters of Genesis is Laban tricking the trickster all the way to the point where he makes Jacob work for seven years to marry the lovely Rachel. He gets married, wakes up the next morning, rolls over, and he's not sleeping, living married to Rachel, but instead lazy eyed Leah, True story. Oh, he just freaks out. You kinda hear Homer Simpson just explode from the Bible. Go and, and what happens is he was supposed to marry Rachel, but the trickster dad swapped out women on the trickster. So he married lazy eyed Leah, the sister had to work another seven years to marry Rachel. The whole thing is a comic ruse. It's its subtle irony. And if you continue in the Old Testament, then you get to the Book of Exodus where Moses goes up on the mountain to talk to God, get the 10 Commandments. Well, he is gone. He left Aaron in charge. The first priest is dear brother to watch over the people. He takes all the plunder and gold and jewelry from Egypt. They melt it down, they create a what? A golden calf. They parade around it and worship. And Aaron tells them, worship this idol. This is the God who delivered you from Egypt. Moses is up on the Mount with God. God tells him, look, you better go down there. People lost their mind. It's going really bad. He comes down, he goes to Aaron and, and you gotta get the subtlety in this. He goes to Aaron. He says, Aaron, what happened? Here's a huge golden idol. Here are Aaron's exact words from Exodus 32 24, quote. Uh, they gave it to me and I threw it in the fire. And out came this calf, Right? It's like a dad walking in on his high school daughter with her boyfriend and they got no clothes on. And they're like, we don't know what happened. We were talking and all our clothes fell off. I got no idea. We're victims. The belt's defective. You know, I mean it just, it's funny. The bible also includes something that the dictionary biblical imagery calls scatological humor. I've been accused of this. And it's biblical scatological humor for those of you who are publicly like scatological poop comedy, that's what it is. Scatological humor. And I'll give you a couple examples of scatological humor in the Old Testament. One is with two guys, Lon and Ehud. You remember this? How many of you remember this story? It's in, uh, Judges chapter three. It says that, uh, there's a guy, his name's Ehud. He's a left-handed south assassin, right? He's Jack Bauer. It's what he is. He can kill anybody. And so he decides he's gonna go and he's gonna kill king e egg lawn who is called quote. This is what your Bible says, A very fat man end quote. That's not funny. It is. Maybe you need to hit the treadmill, but it's still funny. He's a very fat man. So he goes in the left-handed assassin does to the very fat king and says, I want you to release all your security detail. I need to meet with you in private, I have a word from the Lord. So everybody leaves and he pulls out a sword and he stabs the king right in the middle. And the Bible says he was so fat that the fat covered the whole sword. And when all the way up the guy's arm who stabbed him? That's a lot of fat, right? So we're like, that's gross and kind of funny, kind of Monty Python funny. If you think about it, it kinda sounds like a Monty Python skit. And what

happens then is he hit an intestine and slit the intestine. And when you hit the intestine, what comes out? All the feces. And it just poured out of this very fat man, which means there's a lot in there. Now what happens is, uh, the, the left-handed assassin, the south paw assassin, he escapes and the security detail for the king are outside of his chambers. They start smell something really funky cuz he's sliding intestine and they don't know that he got killed. They think instead he's having like a bad chalupa post experience. You know what I'm talking about? Let's Taco Bell, just give him, well, he'll be all right. And they wait and wait and wait. But the scent is so bad. Eventually they break in and they see the king dead and his intestines just emptied themselves all over the floor. And it's kind of funny, unless of course you're the king. Uh, if you move on to Ezekiel four, there's another occasion for scatological humor. This is one of the more peculiar conversations in the Bible. I'm not even making this up. Ezekiel four, God comes to Ezekiel and says this, I want you to go to the bathroom and I want you to stack up all your feces and I want you to cook over it. That's different, right? I mean, you'd all agree with me. You're like, I didn't get that in Sunday school as a kid. That was not my memory verse. Yeah, they skipped that one because they know you'd go home and poop and light it on fire and tell your mom I'm Biblical. Um, I got a verse. So, so then Ezekiel start, this is so funny. Ezekiel starts negotiating with God. Now, I would've argued for takeout, you know, or I would've argued for what? Here's what a Ezekiel says, uh, God, instead of my feces, can I cook over, uh, cow feces? God's like, yeah, I'm cool with that. So that's the compromise. What a weird negotiation. Uh, I'd like to negotiate what kind of feces we cook over. Is it just me or that's different, right? I mean, okay, fine. Uh, I'm having fun, uh, tough crowd. Uh, we'll keep going on. Oh, here's one of my favorites. Elijah. God loved this guy so much. He took him right up to heaven. He didn't even taste death. Enoch and Elijah, the only two guys in the Bible didn't taste death. God loved him so much, he took him right to heaven. Here's, here's the situation. There was a cult in that day, a false religion. Uh, they worshiped a God called bail. Okay? So these, these prophets of bail are against the prophets of God and they're outnumbering and, and absolutely opposing the prophets of God. So they set up the equivalent of an Old Testament octagon. Uh, and what happens is the prophets of BA show up and little Elijah shows up to defend the God of the Bible, and they're gonna have a God showdown right there. And here's what he says. In one Kings 18, Elijah says this, where we read rather, and at noon, Elijah mocked them. And this is a big deal, this pay-per-view. And there's live blogging and the media's there, and he gets up and he mocks their God and he mocks their religion. And you know, you don't think that's a big deal, but imagine, you know, a Muslim who's down on his, you know, prayer cloth or on his rug praying to Mecca, you come up and, and make fun of him. You know, or a Buddhist who's got his, you know, his, you know, heel behind his ear to pray. They're like, doesn't that hurt? You know, what is, are you like an antenna? I mean, what, you know, make a little fun with him. And at noon, Elijah mock them saying cry aloud. For he is a God. Either he is musing or he is relieving himself. Oh, I know why your God can't show up at fight. My God, he's sitting on his throne. He's he's on the toilet. He'll be here later. It's a real bummer. When your God eats cheese, it gets all bound up like that. It makes 'em late for appointments. He's mocking their religion. That's what he does. How about, uh, this one? Uh oh, and Isaiah 44. That's funny. God mocks this guy who gets a piece of wood, he gets a log and he decides this half is good for firewood. And since I got an A in wood shop, I'll carve this half into a God that I can worship. And God mocks this guy. Like, wow, what great skill. I mean, only a real genius would know which half of the log was firewood and which half was God. I mean, it's just a, it's a total mockery. How about this one? You guys read the book of job? There's some funny stuff in Job. I mean, not if you're job, but there's some funny stuff, right? He, his kids die. He loses everything. He breaks out with sores. He's sitting there scratching his, you know, itchy body with shards of clay. The only person that doesn't die is his wife. And that wasn't really a gift. She's no help curse God and die. Thanks baby. That's huge. That's great help. Thanks Barnabas. What an encouragement you are. And, and what happens is, his buddies, who I think are first year Bible college students keep showing up, wanting to debate systematic theology with him. And if you don't get the irony, you miss the point of job. It calls them his friends and his comforters. And these guys have korian bedside manner. They're not comforting at all. And then the, the book near the conclusion, I think it has the funny part where God shows up in Genesis th or in, uh, job 38 rather, and says to Job Cuz Job's getting a little whiny at this point. Gerd your loins. I'm gonna talk to you

like a man, which literally means put a cup on and that's god. God's telling a guy, I'm gonna kick you right in the middle. You got about 30 seconds to get that cup on. And then he goes into a series of 80 questions about science, beginning with where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? And Joe's like, I got it. I tap out, tap out, tap out. He taps out right there. Very smart. And the whole thing is a little bit ironic and sarcastic. How about the book of Proverbs? Any of you seen that? Occasionally? Proverbs makes fun of people. How about the Sluggard, which is a guy who is an image bearer, but is devolving going backward on the evolutionary chart to being a slug. That's what a sluggard is. It's just a lazy guy. We call 'em single white guys who live with their mom in their pajamas. Sleep between Star Wars sheets and blog about how the world should be as part of the pajama. HaDin Sluggard Sluggard Says this about the Sluggard in Proverbs 1924, the sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even raise it to his mouth. It's mocking a guy. He's sitting there watching the sci-fi channel all day cuz it's the Trek marathon. And he's got a, you know, a a a a bowl of guac and a bowl of chips and he takes the chip and puts it in the guac and just doesn't have quite the ambition to get it to his mouth. That guy, the guy who's so lazy, orders pizza and leaves the door unlocked. And when the delivery boy comes, he's like, come in cuz he's too lazy to get up and go to the door to get the meal. That guy, uh, and also mocks the sluggard in Proverbs 2213. And that is the guy who's a sluggard. But he's always got a good reason. He's very creative with his excuses. The Sluggard says there's a lion outside, I shall be killed in the streets. This is the equivalent of a musician who's living with his girlfriend, freeloading off his girlfriend every day she wakes him up at the Kraken noon and says, why don't you go get a job? And he says, there's terrorists out there. I could die. What do you call a musician without a girlfriend? Homeless, moving right along. Uh, oh, that's funny. In the morning they're all like, ha ha ha. You're all like, I play guitar. That's not funny. Yes, it's yes it is. Does it? Ladies, have you read Proverbs to see that it also makes fun of some women because it does. What? What does it say that the nagging wife is like a dripping boce? Which would be really funny if she was nagging because the faucet was dripping and the husband wasn't fixing it. That would be super funny unless you're the husband. And it also says in Proverbs, it's better to live where men than in a house with a quarrelsome, contentious, nagging wife on the roof. And you just think of that. Can you imagine driving home tonight and you're going through the neighborhood and you see a bunch of tents up on the roof of all the houses in your neighborhood. Guys out there with Coleman Lanners and you know, cooking hot dogs and playing Texas. Hold them and folding chairs. Say what happened? Just being biblical brother. Just being biblical, driving me nuts. How about this one? Proverbs 1122, like a gold ring and a pig. Snout is a beautiful woman without discretion. A beautiful woman with no modesty, decency or propriety is like a pig with jewelry, right? It's just not fitting. I often ask the question, okay, so why are you dating her? And the answer is, she's hot, hot. My answer is always sos hell. Hell think it through, think it through, think it through. Run Forrest Run. Can she read? Does she have a Bible? Has she finished rehab? You gotta do your homework. Does he do this all the time? Yes. That's why they have the security. All right, It says repeatedly in the Bible that God mocks people. I'll give you three examples. Psalm 37, 13, the Lord laughs at the wicked for he sees their day is coming. Psalm two, four, he who sits in the heavens last, the Lord holds them in derision and Psalm 59, 8. But you, oh Lord, laugh at them. You hold all the nations in derision. All right, old Testament, God made fun of people. New Testament. Is there any source or reason or example of comedy humor in the New Testament? Sure, we'll start. Colossians four, six, let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt. So you may know how to answer each person. Some people you gotta talk real gracious, some people kind of salty is what they need. Examples include Paul in First Corinthians one, four writing to a jacked up church, right? One guy sleeping with his mom. Everybody's like, it's an alternative lifestyle. I don't know what the problem is. Uh, we'll give him a float in the parade, you know, I mean, uh, come on, I get paid the same either way, I don't care. Uh, I mean we need the seats. So anyways, we'll free some up anyways, uh, they're also getting drunk at communion. They got all kinds of jacked up problems. So Paul pays them a backhanded comment in one Corinthians one, four, he says, I praise God for all the grace he's given you. Which first is like, thanks. Hey, hey, that's not nice. It's like saying you're smart for a dumb guy. You're like, hey, because you only get grace when you sin. So the more grace you get, the more sin you get. I don't get it. I know we'll pray for you. How about this one? Uh, there's two funny occasions

where people get locked out of church. One is Acts 12 where Peter gets locked outside of a church prayer meeting. Two, think it's funny, like, Hey guys, come on. I wrote the Bible. I'm good at this. Let me end to pray. The other one's Revelation three 20, which everyone jacks up. Behold I stand at the door and knock says Jesus. And if you'll answer, I'll come in and eat with you. And every evangelist with the altar call at the rally says, and if today Jesus is knocking at the door of your ho, no, he's, that's not what he's talking about. It's a church that's having a potluck and won't let Jesus come to it. So he's outside trying to break in and knocking on the door, Hey, it's me, Jesus. You might have read my book. Can I come in and have, uh, some food? Jesus gets locked outta the potluck. And it's kind of a funny picture, but the truth is, some churches in the effort to be tolerant and diverse and inclusive of everyone don't have room for Jesus because he and the lesbian Buddhist pastor don't see eye to eye on stuff. How about this one? Galatians five, this one's the best. This one's the best. Now what happens in Galatians is this, there's a church in a town called Galatia and they've been infiltrated by some false teachers called Judaizers who say, to go to heaven, you need to believe in Jesus and be circumcised, obviously if you're a male, okay? Circumcision began with Abraham, who though he was a very old man, circumcised himself, which is funny unless you're Abraham and circumcision. You want me to what? To go to heaven? I mean, is it nice? Is it worth it? You know, like, so, uh, circumcision for those of you who don't know is where you take, uh, the male appendage and you cut some skin off and you notice all the guys are like, I don't like where this is going. I don't care what that point is. This is not funny. Move right along. It is funny. We'll get there. So what happens is, uh, they're saying Jesus plus equals salvation. Jesus uh, taught and Paul echoes that Jesus plus anything, ruins everything. Cuz all you need is Jesus. Not any religious work, not any effort of your own self, not any good thing you do. It's all the good that Jesus does for you. It's gifted righteousness, not earned righteousness like religion teaches. And so what happens is this church is divided. There are gentiles who are not circumcised. There are judaizers who are, and they're fighting over whether or not you have to be circumcised. And I'm, I'm even not sure how they check this, right? I mean, is there like a greeter at the door like, oh, gentile, you sit over here. You know, like just, just the whole, just the, you know what I'm saying? It's like who enforces this? Like what poor deacon drew the small straw and got this job? Oh man, I'm always a circumcision checker. I hate this. And so what happens is Paul writes a letter to the church and they all get together and the pastor reads it and it's sort of tense in the air. And the Jews and the Gentiles are divided. And here's what he says in Galatians five, 11 and 12. But if my brothers still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettled you would emasculate themselves. This is a cut off your pickle joke, right? This is Lorena Bism, that's what it is. Oh, every guy's like, oh, come on man. Okay, now here's what he's saying. He's, it's a reductive out of absurd him. It's a logical argument where he's saying, well, if you think you guys are really holy cuz he cut a little skin off your pickle, well then just go varsity big boy and cut the whole thing off and be super duper holy. Now this being read in a church by the pastor when this is the debated issue, I'm sure all the judaizers are like, that is not funny. I am not eating a hot dog ever again, just in protest. And I'm sure the Gentiles are like, that's funny. Give us more of those. How long is this letter? We can do this again. And he's making fun of religious people who take themselves seriously and take God to lightly and want to add things to Jesus that are not appropriate. Some of you would say, but I thought we were supposed to be loving. That doesn't seem very loving. What is very funny, you could check the Galatians five in the next few verses after the cutoff, your pickle joke, what he says is, we are to love one another like Jesus commanded. And you're like, what? Cut off your pickle for the love of Jesus and I love you. You know, it's a but what this means is we need to define love biblically, not by hallmark. And also, uh, it's not just love for those who are religious, it's love for those who would be tempted to follow them. And by making fun of religious people, we show them what a joke they are. And additionally, we discourage others from following in their example that leads to perhaps the most important point. Was Jesus funny? Did Jesus have a sense of humor or was he more like Spock? Was he just always serious and logical? Walking around with syllogisms, you know, is that how Jesus was? And if you think about it, Jesus' job before beginning his public ministry was as a carpenter. He is a construction worker. He's hanging out with fishermen and blue collar guys for three years. Much of their life is spent walking around and camping. And I don't know about you guys, but you

tend to get 12 blue collar guys together. And eventually somebody's pulling a finger, somebody's telling a joke. You know what I'm talking about? To be fully human, Jesus would have had to have had a sense of humor. But the sense of humor that Jesus had is often totally overlooked. Uh, one man who does not see Jesus as funny is a man named GK Chester. And he's a great author. He wrote an amazing book called Orthodoxy. But he ends that book with his statement. There was some one thing that was far too great for God to show us when he walked upon the earth, and I have sometimes fancied that it was his mirth. He says, you know, as we read the Bible, we learn a lot about Jesus. The one thing we don't see him do is laugh or tell a joke. The creeds even follow this like the nice scene in Apostles Creed. They say that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary suffer under a Pontius Pilate and died. They say nothing about his life, just skip his, his life on the earth as a fully God, fully manned person altogether. Additionally, others have followed in that example. And it includes early films like the 1927 film, King of Kings, one of the first movies made about Jesus by Cecil B. DeMille. Who was it about? Christian. But in that movie, Jesus comes off superhuman. Like he has an aura, a glow about him like he's radioactive, like he lived in Hanford or something for too long. And, and you could tell it's Jesus in the movie, you're like, oh, which one's Jesus? Well, the glowing one, you know, the one who's glowing. But that's not how Jesus really looked. He had no beauty or majesty in him, nothing in his appearance that we would be attracted to him. Isaiah the prophet declares. But that picture of Jesus sort of floating around just telling syllogisms, stroking his beard imitating Spock and glowing like a nightlight is sort of the predominant thinking that has, uh, led to much misunderstanding about Jesus' humor. There are now 17,000 books about Jesus in the, uh, library of Congress. And insofar as I have found, there's only one about Jesus' sense of humor. It's a great understudied aspect of Christian theology. It's called The Humor of Christ. It's by Elton Trueblood. It's a great little book. He's actually a good author, but it's almost, well it's more than 40 years old, so it's been a while. Here's what he says. There are numerous passages which are practically incomprehensible when regarded as sober prose, but which are luminous. They're illuminated. Once we become liberated from the gratuitous assumption that Christ never joked. Once we realized that Christ was not always engaged in pious talk, we have made an enormous step on the road to understanding goes on to say elsewhere. Christ laughed and he expected others to laugh. A misguided piety has made us fear that acceptance of his obvious wit and humor would somehow be mildly blasphemous or sacrilegious. I get accused of this all the time. Religion we think is serious business, right? Think pointed finger, think furrowed brow, think serious religious types. Religion we think is serious business. And serious business is incompatible with banter. The, uh, dictionary of biblical imagery likewise says if there is a single person within the pages of the Bible that we can consider to be a humorist, it is without a doubt. Jesus. Jesus was a master of wordplay, irony and satire, often with an element of humor intermixed. Here's why we miss sometimes the humor of Jesus and the funny parts in the gospels. One, we become overly familiar. Sometimes you have heard the Bible story so often you kinda miss the crazy, shocking, funny human earthy, silly parts of it. Secondly, uh, the centerpiece of Christian theology is the death of Jesus on the cross where God substituted himself and died to pay the penalty for our sin so that we might have salvation. But that can so dominate that Jesus' life is again seen little more as not sending to prepare himself to die, not living as a human being with friends in a sense of humor. And you know what? As you read the Bible, Jesus gets invited to a lot of parties, weddings, house parties, meals. His critics accused him of being a drunkard, a glutton, and a friend of sinners, which is untrue. He didn't drink too much, he didn't eat too much, and his friends were pretty crazy. But he's still friends with crazy people like me. And we're all grateful that Jesus is willing to hang out with people as jacked up as we are. And the religious people couldn't understand. They're like, you know what? All the sinners invite him to their house to have dinner and be their friend. There must be something wrong with him. No, maybe he was really fun to hang out with. Maybe the true mark of a Christian is someone you would eat chicken wings with and shoot pool with or throw darts with or go to the game with, not just if they can exegete the Greek text and beat you in Bible jeopardy like some Sunday school jerk, perhaps I would offer that as a prayer request. But, but maybe the true mark of a mature Christian is someone that is actually kind of fun to hang out with. Now they love God and they love you and they tell the truth, but Jesus was that guy. People love to hang out with him. And we tend to overlook that because religious people tend not to focus

on it. And thirdly, there's cultural distance between the days of Jesus 2000 years ago and our present culture. And how many of you have learned that culture is really the container for comedy, right? I mean, how many of you have watched British comedy? You're like, I don't know what, it's so funny. Well, it's cuz British people have a different culture. And how many of you have been to another country and everybody's laughing, you're like, huh, I dunno what we're talking about. You know, because it's a different cultural context. Well, that being said, we will now explore Jesus and his sense of humor. I'll give you three examples with Jesus teaching first. Uh, there is an occasion in Matthew 16 where Peter comes to him and Jesus says, who do you think that I am? Peter says, I think that you are the Christ, the Son of God. And he says, you are now going to be called Rocky. Right? Names him the rock. Now the Catholic church didn't get the joke, so we ended up with a papacy instead of a good laugh. And they thought that, uh, the point was that Peter's the rock on which the church's foundation is built. It's the foundation to the church. The rock is not Peter, it's Jesus and his confession that Jesus is the Christ. Because just a little bit later in Matthew 16, he also looks at Peter and says, get behind me, Satan. Right? Which they never say that, you know, the f the foundation of the church is Satan. No, no. Uh, and and what happens a little while later is that when a young woman comes up to Peter, when Jesus is going to be crucified and says, do you know Jesus? He says, I, I never met the guy. Totally denies him. He's not the rock. He's a little bitty, bitty pebble that Jesus is kind of making fun of. It's like walking up to a really skinny little computer programmer guy and going, what's up? Tough guy. He's like, nothing. You know, it's kind of funny. Calls him Rocky. He's not a rock. He's very unstable. Secondly, there is an occasion where Jesus says, before we judge someone, we should first take the what out of our own eye. The plank, right? If you look at somebody and they got a little speck of dust in their eye and you got a plank in your eye, you're supposed to deal with your own thing before you deal with their thing. It's an issue of sin and hypocrisy. Jesus was a carpenter. And so he used this analogy. I'll give you an analogy. Here's what he's talking about, just so you can see it. Even 2000 years removed, I'll close my eyes so don't poke it out. But let's say there's a guy over here with let's say a little bit of let's say toothpick in his eye. And you're the guy saying, dude, seriously, you gotta deal with that. You know, I mean, it's embarrassing. I mean, you're making a bad witness. People are talking about it and you're totally oblivious to the fact that you have this obvious issue you need to deal With. It's kind of funny, I got sawdust in my eye. Prophetic, okay, uh, how about this one? How many of you have read that section in the Bible where Jesus says It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven? And the Bible commentators in an effort to treat the Bible seriously, which I appreciate, uh, they missed the joke. So some of you may have heard this interpretation. Well, there was a place in the wall in Jerusalem that they had a little itty bitty door and that a camel could get down on his hindquarters and shimmy through like he's a marine in bootcamp. And if he shi he will shimmy for you. He shimmied through the hole in the wall. Then he could get to the other like a camel shimmies. You ever seen a camel who shimmies. You ever seen a camel drop down on all fours and be like, like what I can do? They can't do it. It doesn't work. And if he shimmies through to the other side, then they called that the, uh, the eye of the needle. There you go. That fixes it. No, it doesn't. It's a, it's a joke. It's funny. I'll show you. Here's a needle. And what he's saying is, it is easier for a camel to pass to the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Thank you. We were recently voted the second most innovative church in America. This is why the cardboard is the new cutting edge. And some of you're like, it's not gonna fit. Yes, you got the joke and it's, it's still kind of funny, right? Like you're like, well what if we start here? No. What if we start here? Nope. What if we start in the middle? I think it's too big. Yeah, it is too big. That's the point. It's a joke. It's, it's actually still kind of funny. 2000 years later, right? You get it. It's kind of funny. I'll leave the camel cuz I like the camel. It's a Seattle camel. All white hasn't seen the son since September. Jesus' favorite target is religious people right now this is because Jesus and religion are different. We are o c D about Jesus and we're not very big on religion. And we do believe that the Bible is altogether true and we're big on the Bible. But what we see in the Bible is Jesus makes fun of religious people because they take themselves so seriously. They judge others, they overlook their own folly. And furthermore, they like to think that their righteousness is of their own doing by being so serious rather than a gift of God so that they could lighten up a little bit. So Jesus says of the Pharisees,

the religious folks that they're, that they're a bag of snakes. He tells 'em that. And he says that their mom shag the devil. I think it's a John eight. He says, uh, your father is the devil, which means your mom shag the devil, you know, to paraphrase Austin Powers. And, and if you are a serious devout religious type, well that's not very funny. Like you're one of those Mormon boys in a clean press shirt riding your bike to hell. Like that's not very funny for you. Some are like, that was funny, but I don't know if I should laugh. You should. Um, he made fun of the way religious people pray and Matthew six six, you're like, you can't make fun of the way religious people pray. Sure you can. Uh, Matthew six six. When do you pray? Do not pray like the hypocrites, they love to stand and pray in the synagogues, in the street corners that they may be seen by others. Some of you have had this religious uncle and when he comes over for thanksgiving, you just like, come on cuz he always has to stand up. Oh, let me bless the food. You're like, oh God, this is gonna be an hour of King James English. Lord God, we beseech the on behalf of the bird. We thank you for the bird. May the bird nourish us that we might go forward to do works of service pleasing to you. And you're sitting there as a kid going, this is taking forever. Gimme the knife. I'm gonna shiv Uncle Jeff and cut that Turkey. He makes fun of the way religious people fast. Says it this way. Matthew 16, 6 16, when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites for they disfigure their faces that they're fasting, maybe seen by others. Here's what they do. Y'all look like supermodels. You know, I or are you okay? I'm fasting for the Lord. I love the Lord. I worship the Lord, I serve the Lord, I belong to the Lord. I honor the Lord And I'm not eating this year for the Lord. How about this one? He makes fun of the way they tithe. You say tithing isn't funny. It can be says this in Matthew 23. What do you scribes in Pharisees, hypocrites for you tithe mint and dill and common and have neglect the weight to your matters of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness. What he says is this, you guys are tithing outta your spice rack. They're so serious. This is religious people. 10%. Okay Lord, here's 10% of my money. And uh, okay, uh, nine peppercorns for me, one for the Lord. Nine mint leaves, one for the Lord. They show up at church. Okay, God, here's your money. Here's a 10th of all my cinnamon. It's yours. I love you Like you guys have o c d. You guys are freaks and you're jerks. You're no fun. You're not nice to people. Yeah, you tie that to your spice rack, but you're not any fun and you're not very pleasant. Additionally, he makes fun of the way they lead others. Well, you wanna make fun of a religious person, mock the religious leader and those who are following then run for your life. But Matthew 15 says it this way. Jesus says, there are blind guides and the blind lead, the Biden both fall into a pit, right? What he's saying is this, and you gotta see it. It's like you're in a new city and you wanna see it. So he say, I'm gonna sign up for one of those guided tours. You get on the bus and you got a blind tour guy. Like there's, you know, there's a blind tour guy saying off to our right. I you have no idea. And off to our left, I I got nothing for you. Moving along I see, uh, utter darkness and I have no idea where we're going. What he's saying is religious leaders, they, they can't point out anything and they can't take you anywhere cuz they're totally blind to the truth. And Jesus makes fun of religious people. And do you think religious people ever get offended? Oh yeah, they totally do. And it's funny because in Matthew chapter 15, verses 10 through 14, the disciples come to Jesus and they ask him this very peculiar question. Uh, do you know that the Pharisees are offended? Really? I say their mom shagged the devil. I made fun of their tithing. Really? They're offended, shocking. And, and and, and they are offended. And Jesus does offend. And one of the great, or perhaps the only postmodern sin is to offend anyone because after all, there is no truth, just perspective. And your religion, if it works for you, it's good for you. But you can't say that one is right and one is wrong. And you can't say that any perspective is right because we have our own opinion. And I went to college and I know what I'm talking about because that's what the grad student said after he got done smoking a lot of weed. Look, I know how this works. And Jesus offends people. It says That's wrong, that's not right. That's crazy. That's a silly idea. I love you. But that religious or philosophical perspective is just nonsense. And Jesus says this in Matthew 11, six, blessed is the one who is not offended by me. Now, some were offended by Jesus and they murdered him. We worship a guy who got killed. So you know, somebody was upset. And Jesus says, blessed are they who are not offended by me. You say, how do I not be offended by Jesus? Let me tell you, here's the secret, repent of sin. Because here's the truth, we're all Pharisees, we all are. Some of us are religious Pharisees, some are spiritual Pharisees, some are just moral Pharisees, political Pharisees, recycling pharisees, right? We think

we're better than everyone else because we know how it should be done. And we do it that way. And those who don't, we make fun of them. We may make fun behind their back with our friends, blog about them, send anonymous emails, you know, take on an online identity and fire away. But the truth is, the only way to not be offended by Jesus is to understand that you know what, we're all Pharisees to varying degrees and in varying ways, we're all self-righteous. We're proud, we're judgmental, we're hypocritical. And the only way to not be offended by Jesus is to repent of our own religion. To repent of our own self-righteousness, to repent of our own holier than thou attitudes. And then to have a good laugh with Jesus. Oftentimes at our own expense. I will close with some recommendations on why I think humorous, helpful in general. First we wanna be like Jesus. And Jesus was funny and people laughed with him and he laughed at them. And to be a Christian means you need to be sanctified in your sense of humor. Number two, it defeats religion, religious people who take themselves seriously. If you just enter into a very serious argument, it just goes nowhere. But if you make fun of them, they totally freak out. And it's funny, it just is because it's a weapon against religion. Irony and sarcasm and satire. And that's why every culture has its comedians and that's why they are revolutionaries. Number three, people take themselves too seriously and God do lightly. They just do. So many people take themselves so seriously. Their political party, their cause, their issue, their agenda, their their morality. They take themselves way too seriously. And sometimes they take God way too lightly. I mean we have churches in this city and around the country where the pastors don't believe in Jesus. The Bible is a myth, but God forbid you show up with a hat cuz that's disrespectful and the gay usher will escort you out. It's just like, what? Nobody thinks this is funny. It's crazy. We take certain things so seriously and God so lightly. Uh, number four, some things are just a joke. And if you treat them seriously, you're gonna give them credence, which you don't want to do. They're just a joke. I, I was debating with a guy recently, he said, I don't believe in God. I said, where do you think everything came from? He said, it made itself seriously. You want me to respond to that? Like, how does nothing make everything that I mean, come on man. I mean like if I came home and found a new TV and seven kids, I'd be like, wow, nothing did this Silly Proverbs 14, 13. Even in laughter point number five, the heart may ache and at the end of joy may be grief. Here's the point. Just because someone is laughing or has a good sense of humor, it doesn't mean they're not grieving. It doesn't mean they're not sorrowful. It doesn't mean that they don't have a heart. It doesn't mean that they don't have compassion. People grieve differently and it's religious people who think that we all should feel the same way and that we should sort of express our feelings in the same way. I'll give you an example. A buddy of mine years ago, he was dying of cancer. He was in the hospital, lost all his hair. I went to visit him. You know, it's sad and I'm thinking, oh man, this is, this is horrible and I don't know what I'm supposed to say. And I go to him. I said, dude, honestly man, how you doing? He said, it's awesome man. Now that I've lost all my hair, I save a ton on shampoo. I was just like, what the heck? And it's not that he's not grieving, it's not that he's not mourning, it's not that he's not sad in his heart, but what he believes is Jesus died for my sin. I'm gonna, even if I die, I'll go to be with him. There is the resurrection of the dead. I'll get a new body without cancer and my new body will have hair. And you know what? In the middle of it all, I'm gonna make a few jokes cuz that's how I get through it. And religious people don't allow that. Oh, you're not serious, you're not reverent. Sure I am. But I also believe that God is a good God. And sometimes all you can do is laugh through your tears. Uh, point number six, Nehemiah eight 10 says, the joy of the Lord is your strength. People who don't laugh enough, they're weak. Their relationships are weak. We laugh a lot at the Driscoll home. I don't mock my wife, I don't mock my kids, just so you know. But I am kind of a silly dad. And I believe that going to the gym will make your body strong and laughing a lot will make your soul strong. The joy of the Lord is your strength. It makes you spiritually strong to learn to laugh a little bit. I laugh all the time with my kids. I actually have a ton of fun with my wife and my kids. One of the things that attracted me to grace, she laughed at my jokes and thought I was funny. Even when I wasn't. I crack up all the time. My two-year-old son, uh, Gideon, I call him good guy gd, two of his first words that he put together were silly daddy because we're always have, we just have a lot of fun at my house. And I believe the joy of the Lord is our strength and it's cheaper than meds. Uh, number seven, it uh, it heightens all your other passions. It's the person who can't laugh, who can't grieve, who can't more. It's the person who's emotionally constrained. Oh, I don't wanna laugh.

I don't want to cry. I don't want to feel, you know what? Our God is a passionate God. He hates and he loves, he weeps and he laughs. Our God has the full range of his emotions and we're made in his image and likeness. And Jesus was the perfect man. And emotion and passion is good providing it is cultivated in a healthy way. And if you can laugh then you'll also be able to aggrieve appropriately. That's why the Bible says we are to rejoice with those who rejoice and we are to mourn with those who mourn. And we are to experience the full breadth of human emotion. And number eight, it is missiological. First Corinthians nine in the apostle. Paul says to the weak, I became weak to the strong, I became strong. I have become all things to all people. So that by all means I might win to Jesus as many as possible. I do this all for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings. What Paul is saying is I look at the culture and I do whatever is most effective to point people to Jesus. We live in one of the least church cities in the United States of America. People drive by churches could give a rip about Jesus, the Bible and Christianity. And they wake up in the morning and they listen to comedic talk, radio banter on the way to work while they're at work supposed to be working. You know, this is what you do. Download little funny clips from YouTube, right? And then on the way home, listen to more comedic banter. Talk radio, come home, watch a sitcom before you go to bed, watch Jay Leno, David Letterman, John Stewart, Stephen Colbert, maybe something off of comedy central Mind, a mencia a standup comic. That's the average person. Comedy is the language that people speak. For me to be a good missionary, I need to tell a few jokes. If I'm gonna get up for an hour every service, every week for my whole life and yell about sin and grace and Jesus, occasionally I need to give you a comic, reprieve a few jokes, entertain a little bit. And if it means I need to be a fool for Christ, I'm cool with that because at the end of the day, my name really doesn't mean anything. But the name of Jesus means everything. And in a city where everybody ignores church in Jesus, if I could just kind of be a fruitcake and people show up like this guy's nuts, you gotta come see him. And people come and they meet Jesus cuz I'm talking about him then I say, praise be to God, I'll be a fool for Christ. I'm cool with that. And at the end of the day people say it's, but it's gonna turn people away. We are one of the fastest growing churches in one of the least church cities in America. And you know who tends to come here more than pretty much anywhere else in the country. Young white guys in their twenties that I make fun of. More furiously than anyone, right? You guys who live at your mom's house and sleep between Star Wars sheets. I mean you guys are awesome. And the reason I make fun of you is cuz I love you. And they know that under it all is love. And I'm just the big brother giving him a wedgie for Jesus. That's my job. Perhaps. In conclusion, here are a few things I would tell you to sanctify your sense of humor. One, never mock God. Don't make fun of God. God's great. Doesn't, sin isn't a fool doesn't make mistakes. Don't mock God. Mock other religions and their false perspective of God, but don't mock the real God. Number two, don't mock everyone. Right? Don't, don't mock everyone. If someone's a victim of a terrible crime or abuse, don't mock them. In addition, don't mock your spouse. Don't do that. Don't mock your kids. That's cruel. Don't mock your mother. Don't you say she's a huge source of material. Look, I know, but let it go. But now you're dad, mock him. I mean he's ridiculous, right? And he can handle it. He's got pants up to here and one eyebrow. I mean, let him have it. Don't mock all the time, right? Don't always be telling a joke. Can't take anything serious. I'll give you an example. When I preached the Christ on the cross series about the murder of Jesus, I don't think in 12 weeks, I told one joke. I don't remember telling one joke cuz it's not funny. We murdered God. It's real serious. I've got a book coming out next month called Vintage Jesus. It's filled with all kinds of comedy and jokes and I think it's hilarious. Next October, I've got another book, death I love coming out. There's not one joke in there, there's nothing funny in there. It's really serious. I'm not always funny. It depends on what I'm trying to communicate. And we need to have wisdom that way. Number four, heed wise counsel. Right? If your parents, your friends, somebody who's godly, a pastor, communicative bleeder says, that's gross. That's not funny. You're, that's just wrong. Knock it off. You're being stupid. Then listen, cuz what's funny to you may not be working. Take it from someone who's been picketed. Um, number five, keep looking for the line. But here's the problem. Everyone has the line of propriety at a different place. I preach to you guys, lines in one place, goes out to the campuses, lines in another place, goes out on the internet, lines in a totally different place. It's crazy. I'll preach on rednecks and make fun of rednecks and you guys are like, and then I get, you know, some sort of rebuke and crayon from

Kentucky. You know, Everybody's got the line in a different place. Number six, again, laugh at yourself. You are the best source of the greatest comedic material. Tell stories about silly things you've said done believed. You know, gosh, you won't believe what I did. I mean, laugh at yourself. Let others laugh at yourself. Have a little fun with yourself because you are a joke. Number seven, uh, know who to mock. Psalm one says, don't sit in the seat of the mockers. So you gotta, the mock is the one who mocks everybody. You don't mock everybody. You gotta be very spirit led in your mockery, right? You gotta careful, don't mock the person who loves and is serving Jesus. Right? Don't mock Billy Graham. He's he's great guys. I got, you know, the self-righteous religious guy. The person who takes themselves too seriously. Gotta be strategic in who you mock. And number eight, know when to mock Psalm, uh, proverbs rather, 26, 4 answer. Not a fool according to his folly. Lest you be like him, answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be wise in his own eyes. You say, what does that mean? That sounds like some sort of zen statement that would come in a fortune cookie. Do not rebuke the fool. Rebuke the fool grasshopper. They're like, what the heck? I don't get that. Here's what he's saying. If someone is hard-hearted, religious and difficult, if you mock them, they're just gonna bait you into a fight. It's gonna get ugly. You're gonna descend to their level. The flame throwing blogger themm will ensue and it's not a good witness. But additionally, there are other people who think way too highly of themselves and the result is they need to be taken down a few notches. So feel free to take a shot at them. It's a discernment issue. I would say this as well. I believe there are two kinds of people, people that I've offended and people who have never heard me. I believe those are the primary categories to which I can, you know, I'm speaking tonight. And what I would say is this, if I have offended you, you know, in the past today, uh, maybe in a minute I'll get to you. If I missed you, I apologize for overlooking you. I don't mean to discriminate. Uh, or in the future if you comment, I happen to offend you. I would ask you before you feed your offense, to ask yourself this question, why am I offended? Why am I offended? And if you're offended because I've sinned, then honestly I would ask your forgiveness. I am a sinner. I have crossed the line, I do cross the line and I ask your forgiveness if I have sinned. But if you are offended because I've hit a nerve, if you are offended because that's your issue, it's fun to laugh at the other guys. But wait, I hit your sense of pride or self-righteousness or religion or holier than thou wisdom or dearly beloved wisdom, then I would ask you not to feed your offense, but to repent of your sin and to join me and have a good laugh at your own expense. The righteousness comes from faith in Jesus, not of your own works. And that you don't need to defend yourself all the time. Because in the end, loving Jesus is what it's all about. I will close with this quote from my dear friend, Charles Hadden Spurgeon. He's a dead reformed baptist preacher. He was an eccentric guy, weird sense of humor, quirky, passionate, had tons of critics, but he wrote a little book called Eccentric Preachers that I read this week. It's out of print. But I took three sections of the book and put them together and I'll read them for you because I think it really expresses the heart of what I'm trying to articulate. He says, many hearers lose much blessing through criticizing too much and meditating too little and many more incur great sin by coating those who live for the good of others. True pastors have enough of care and travail without being burdened by undeserved and useless fault finding. We have something better to do than to be forever answering every malignant or frivolous slander, which is set afloat to injure us. Uh, there are tender loving spirits pastors who feel the trial very keenly and are sadly hindered in brave service by cruel assaults, uh, the rougher and stronger among us. Those preachers with thicker hide laugh at those who ridicule us, but upon others the effect is very sorrowful. As ministers, we are very far from being perfect and I would wholeheartedly agree with that. But many of us are doing our best and we are grieved that the minds of our people should be more directed to our impersonal perfections than our divine message. I always say, I stand on a stage so you can take better aim filled with the same spirit of contrary. The men of this world still depreciate the ministers whom God sends them and profess that they would gladly listen. If different preachers could be found, nothing can please them. Their cas are dealt out with heedless universality. Cephus or Peter is too blunt. Apollos is too flowery. Paul is too argumentative. Timothy is too young. James is too severe, John is too gentle. Well then let each servant of God tell his message in his own way. I love that line. Well then let each servant of God tell his message in his own way to his own master. That would be Jesus. He shall stand or fall judge the preacher if you like, but do remember that there is something better to be done than

that. Namely to get all the good you cannot of him. And pray his master to put more good into him. I know I am one quirky, weird guy and I'm willing to be a fool for Christ. And I hope that I can be as weird as possible. So as many people come and they stop looking at me cuz I'm pointing to Jesus and they receive the forgiveness of sin and eternal life that he gives. I, I absolutely in my heart of hearts love this church. And I have a lot of fun being a Christian. I have a lot of fun being a preacher. I have a lot of fun pastoring this church. It's actually a great joy for me, even sometimes in the midst of the tears. And I would ask your forgiveness for those times when I fail you. But I would ask you to do me a favor and take as much good out of me as you can. I work hard. Take as much from my instruction as you possibly can cuz that's all I really care about. And pray that God by his grace would give me more wisdom to teach well and that, uh, God would put more into me as my brother Spurgeon says, so that you could take more out of me.