

The Power of Humor

By now, you all know that I am a wordsmith; it's just part of who I am. I've been told that sometimes I use words in my newsletter article that a person needs to look up. That's likely not going to change. Never a day goes by without Google getting at least one query for a definition for a new word from me.

It goes back to my junior high days when I read the World Book and Webster's Unabridged Dictionary for the joy of learning. Nowadays, Google is my go-to source for information. In saying that, I also acknowledge that you can't take all data from a single source as gospel. To do so is irresponsible.

Whenever I use a word that doesn't quite fit the context, it causes a lot of internal conflicts for me as a communicator. In Sunday's sermon, I used the word cynical regarding Jesus' sense of humor. Being cynical is an all too human trait that we associate with pessimism or mocking (literally two suggested synonyms suggested by Microsoft Word). I categorically denounce and wholly repent of my use of that term.

According to a writer for British publication The Guardian, we should see cynicism differently. Of course, cynicism is neither wholly good nor bad. It's easy to see how you can be too cynical, but it's also possible to be not cynical enough" (Julian Baggini, In Praise of Cynicism, 2013). A true cynic (and there are far too many in today's world) may never see anything in the world worth celebrating and always assumes the worst in others.

However, I believe that Jesus had a fantastic sense of humor. Jesus' native tongue was Aramaic. Yet the gospels are written in Greek, losing some of the subtle wordplays in translation. Imagine the exponential losses that occurred in translating from Greek to Latin and later to English.

In a 2013 article written by the Rev. Tim Schenck, an Episcopal priest, we get a real glimpse of the depth of Jesus' humor.

A master storyteller would never forsake humor as a means to reach an audience. Jesus, who spent much of his ministry breaking down barriers between people, knew that humor does exactly this. Humor disarms and unites; it sets people at ease and leaves them receptive to the speaker's message.

Jesus recognized that humor is as equal a part of the human condition as suffering and joy. It is integral to the human condition, and Jesus embodied this just as much as he embodied forgiveness, compassion, and hope. Jesus had a wonderfully vibrant sense of humor, but it wasn't employed merely to "get laughs." It is humor that seeks to inform and convert.

Jesus would not be a fully orb'd human being without the gift of humor. Even when aimed at his most vehement detractors, the religious establishment, Jesus uses humor to draw attention to the danger of narrow-mindedness. Levity makes life memorable, joyful, and life-giving.

So go ahead, tell a joke, make a wisecrack, loosen up, and allow God to be present even in the breakdown and belly laugh at yourself moments. As you read the gospel, realize that humor is a gift that brightens day-to-day living. Laughter is good for the soul and a way to shine a light into darkness.

Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." Genesis 21:6 Pastor Kenny

Calendar for the Week

Wednesday

5:00 p.m. Youth

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Lexa Worship

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Marvell Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Marvell Worship

6:00 p.m. Administrative Council Meeting

ATTENDANCE

Lexa	No Service because of snow
Marvell Sunday School	10
Marvell Worship	31 + 182

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

2022 Budget	\$193,280
Needed each week	3,717
Received this week	2,690
Blessing Boxes	50
Capital Improvement	25