

MONDAY

Bible verses through the Gospel of John

JOHN 7:14-15 . *With the Feast already half over, Jesus showed up in the Temple, teaching. The Jews were impressed, but puzzled: "How does he know so much without being schooled?"*

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Bill and Doug went into a diner that looked as though it had seen better days. As they slid into a booth, Bill wiped some crumbs from the seat. Then he took a napkin and wiped some moisture from the table.

The waitress came over and asked if they wanted some menus.

"No thanks," said Doug. "I'll just have a cup of black coffee."

"I'll have black coffee, too," Bill said. "And please make sure the cup is clean."

The waitress shot him a nasty look. She turned and marched off into the kitchen.

Two minutes later, she was back.

"Two cups of black coffee," she announced, sternly. "Which one of you wanted the clean cup?"

from BonJon via Sermon Fodder

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A man feared his wife wasn't hearing as well as she used to and he thought she might need a hearing aid. Not quite sure how to approach her on the subject, he called the family doctor to discuss the problem.

The Doctor told him there is a simple informal test the husband could perform to give the doctor a better idea about her hearing loss. Here's what you do," said the Doctor, "stand about 40 feet away from her and say something in a normal conversational speaking tone see if she hears you. If not, go to 30 feet, then 20 feet, and so on until you get a response."

That evening, the wife is in the kitchen cooking dinner, and he was in the Lounge. He says to himself, "I'm about 40 feet away, let's see what happens." Then in a normal tone he asks, "Honey, what's for dinner?" No response.

So the husband moves closer to the kitchen, about 30 feet from his wife and repeats, "Honey, what's for dinner?" Still no response.

Next he moves into the dining room where he is about 20 feet from his wife and asks, "Honey, what's for dinner?" Again he gets no response.

So, he walks up to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away. "Honey, what's for dinner?" Again there is no response.

So he walks right up behind her. "Honey, what's for dinner?"

Then he suddenly hears her say, "Ralph!, for the FIFTH time, - it's CHICKEN!" *Humor Digest*

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It seems that soul-winning is the ultimate spiritual discipline.
We can pray...and never tell.
We can read the Bible...and never tell.
We can fast...and never tell.
We can give...and never tell.
We can attend...and never tell.
We can meditate...and never tell.
But the moment you open your mouth in witness, you are driven to pray, you are driven to know the Word more fully, you are driven to fast, you are driven to give, you are driven to attend, you are driven to meditate. *Morris Chapman,*

TUESDAY

John 7:16-19 *Jesus said, "I didn't make this up. What I teach comes from the One who sent me. Anyone who wants to do his will can test this teaching and know whether it's from God or whether I'm making it up. A person making things up tries to make himself look good. But someone trying to honor the one who sent him sticks to the facts and doesn't tamper with reality. It was Moses, wasn't it, who gave you God's Law? But none of you are living it. So why are you trying to kill me?"*

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Jesus changed the whole world with 12 (only 11 of whom panned out) disciples. Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* is a study of how human organizations change. How does a system reach the "tipping point" whereby an organizational culture is transformed? Gladwell documents that it takes no more than six children in a school to begin wearing a certain brand of sport shoe to reach the tipping point whereby in just a few days a hundred children will begin wearing the same brand of shoe.

"I believe Gladwell is right. In all of the churches I have served as pastor, only 6 percent of the members gave nearly two-thirds of all the financial gifts of the church. I've served some wonderful churches, but I've never served a church that wasn't being led by 6 percent of the members. Only 6 percent of the congregation are people to whom God has given the passion and the position to lead the whole church.

"There is a word of grace here for church leaders. If you want to give the church a brighter future, you only have to convince 6 percent of the people in the church. As a bishop, if I want to reverse the decline of my conference, I only have to identify a mere 6 percent who know how to make that turn around happen...

"Christianity tends to be a minority movement. Jesus occasionally attracted multitudes, but His transformative work tended to be through a small group of disciples. Thanks be to God we don't have to wait to follow the Spirit until 99 percent of everyone thinks this direction is a good idea. God can work through something as seemingly small and insignificant as a mustard seed to grow the Kingdom."
Will Willmon via Preaching Now

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A social worker who had recently transferred from the big city to the mountains was touring her new territory. She came upon the tiniest cabin she had ever seen. Intrigued, she knocked on the door.

"Anybody home?"

A child's voice answered, "Yep."

"Is your father there?"

"Pa? Nope, he left before Ma came in."

"Well, is your mother there?"

"Nope, Ma left just before I got here."

"Are you never together as a family?"

"Sure, but not here. This is the outhouse!" *GCFL*

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"Men and women must work that is as certain as the sun. But we may work grudgingly or we may work gratefully. We may work as people or machines. We have a choice about our attitude!

There is no work so rude that we may not exalt it; no work so impassive that we may not breathe a soul into it; no work so dull that we may not enliven it if we understand that what we are doing is service for our Lord Jesus Christ." - *Henry Gilles via Laugh & Lift*

WEDNESDAY

John 7:20 *The crowd said to Jesus, "You're crazy! Who's trying to kill you? You're demon-possessed."*

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A man's car stalled on a country road. When he got out to try to fix it, a cow came along and stopped beside him.

"Your trouble is probably in the carburetor," said the cow.

Startled, the man jumped back and ran down the road until he met the farmer. He told the farmer his story.

"Was it a large brown cow with a white spot over the right eye?" asked the farmer.

"Yes!"

"Oh, I wouldn't listen to Bessie," said the Farmer. "She knows tractors and diesels but doesn't really have a clue about gasoline engines." *Humor*

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I was shocked, confused, bewildered as I entered Heaven's door, not by the beauty of it all, nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven who made me sputter and gasp... the thieves, the liars, the sinners, the alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade who swiped my lunch money twice.

Next to him was my old neighbor who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought was rotting away in hell, was sitting pretty on cloud nine, looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, "What's the deal? I would love to hear your take.

How'd all these sinners get up here? God must've made a mistake.

"And why is everyone so quiet, so somber -- give me a clue."

"Hush, child," He said, "they're all in shock. No one thought they'd be seeing you!"

Remember, just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car. Every saint has a past...every sinner has a future.

Sam Spence, Weekly Letter from the Chaplain

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RADIO CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AIRPORT TOWER

Tower: Delta 702, cleared for takeoff, contact Departure on 124.7

Pilot (of Delta 702): Tower, Delta 702, switching to Departure. By the way, as we lifted off we saw some kind of dead animal on the far end of the runway.

Tower: Continental 635, cleared for takeoff behind Delta 702, contact Departure on frequency 124.7. Did you copy the report from Eastern 702?

Pilot (Continental 635): Continental 635, roger, cleared for takeoff; and yes, we copied Delta, and have already notified our caterers.

Tower (to pilot after landing): Just to let you know, on the approach you were a little bit left of the centerline.

Pilot: That is correct, Sir. And my first officer was slightly to the right.

Pilot: Tower -- Cessna N2349 -- student pilot -- out of fuel!

Tower: Roger Cessna N2349'er, reduce airspeed to best glide! Do you have the airfield in sight?

Pilot: Uh, Tower ... I am on the south ramp. I just want to know where the fuel truck is.

Mark's Musings

THURSDAY

John 7:21-24 *Jesus said, "I did one miraculous thing a few months ago, and you're still standing around getting all upset, wondering what I'm up to. Moses prescribed circumcision—originally it came not from Moses but from his ancestors—and so you circumcise a man, dealing with one part of his body, even if it's the Sabbath. You do this in order to preserve one item in the Law of Moses. So why are you upset with me because I made a man's whole body well on the Sabbath? Don't be nitpickers; use your head—and heart!—to discern what is right, to test what is authentically right."*

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Islam is not JUST a religion, nor is it a cult. In its fullest form, it is a complete, total, 100% system of life.

Islam has religious, legal, political, economic, social, and military components. The religious component is an open door for all of the other components.

Islamization begins when there are sufficient Muslims in a country to agitate for their religious privileges. When politically correct, tolerant, and culturally diverse societies agree to Muslim demands for their religious privileges, some of the other components tend to creep in as well.

Here's how it works: **As long as the Muslim population remains around or under 2% in any given country, they will be for the most part be regarded as a peace-loving minority, and not as a threat to other citizens.** This is the case in: United States -- 0.6%, Australia -- 1.5%, Canada -- 1.9%, China -- 1.8%, Italy -- 1.5%, Norway -- 1.8%

At 2% to 5%, they begin to proselytize from other ethnic minorities and disaffected groups, often with major recruiting from the jails and among street gangs. At this point, they will work to get the ruling government to allow them to rule themselves (within their ghettos) under Sharia, the Islamic Law. This is happening in: Denmark -- 2%, Germany -- 3.7%.

From 5% on, they exercise an inordinate influence in proportion to their percentage of the population. This is occurring in: France -- 8%, Philippines -- 5%, Sweden -- 5%, Switzerland -- 4.3%, and The Netherlands -- 5.5%.

When Muslims approach 10% of the population, they tend to increase lawlessness as a means of complaint about their conditions. In Paris, we are already seeing car-burnings. Such tensions are seen daily, particularly in Muslim sections in: Guyana -- 10%, India -- 13.4%, Israel -- 16%, Kenya -- 10%, Russia -- 15%.

After reaching 20%, nations can expect hair-trigger rioting, jihad militia formations, sporadic killings, and the burnings of Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, such as in: Ethiopia -- Muslim 32.8%.

At 40%, nations experience widespread massacres, chronic terror attacks, and ongoing militia warfare, such as in: Bosnia -- 40%, Chad -- 53.1%, Lebanon -- 59.7%.

From 60%, nations experience unfettered persecution of non-believers of all other religions (including non-conforming Muslims), such as in: Albania -- 70%, Malaysia -- 60.4%, Qatar -- 77.5%, Sudan -- 70%.

After 80%, expect daily intimidation and violent jihad, some State-run ethnic cleansing, and even some genocide, as these nations drive out the infidels, and move toward 100% Muslim, such as has

been experienced and in some ways is on-going in: Bangladesh -- 83%, Egypt -- 90%, Gaza -- 98.7%, Indonesia -- 86.1%, Iran -- 98%, and Iraq -- 97%.

100% Muslim believers will usher in the peace of 'Dar-es-Salaam' -- the Islamic House of Peace. Here there's supposed to be peace, because everybody is a Muslim, and the Koran is the only word, such as in: Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Yemen. Unfortunately, peace is never achieved, as in these 100% states the most radical Muslims intimidate and spew hatred, and satisfy their blood lust by killing less radical Muslims, for a variety of reasons.

Today's 1.5 billion Muslims make up 22% of the world's population. But their birth rates dwarf the birth rates of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and all other believers. Muslims may exceed 50% of the world's population by the end of this century. *Adapted from Dr. Peter Hammond's book: Slavery, Terrorism and Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat, and Chaplain Ed Skiba*

(If we fail to share our faith through laziness or unconcern, someone else will take up the neglect by forcing theirs.)

FRIDAY

John 7:25-27 *That's when some of the people of Jerusalem said, "Isn't this the rabbi they were out to kill? And here he is out in the open, saying whatever he pleases, and no one is stopping him. Could it be that the rulers know that he is, in fact, the Messiah? And yet we know where this man came from. The Messiah is going to come out of nowhere. Nobody is going to know where he comes from."*

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Where is my Sunday paper?" the irate customer calling the newspaper office loudly demanded, wanting to know where her Sunday edition was.

"Ma'am," said the newspaper employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until tomorrow, on Sunday."

There was quite a long pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition, as she was heard to mutter, "Well, that may be why no one was at church today!"
from Deane via GCFL

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I left my faith in my late teen years. Finally, after years of frustrated living, Jesus drew me back to Him. It wasn't a big church event. It wasn't a friend who witnessed to me about my sins. It was the Spirit of God who nudged me back to being a devoted follower of Christ. It wasn't mystical. It was not full of fireworks—it occurred in a Volkswagen Jetta in the parking lot of Knott's Berry Farm. It was just Jesus reconnecting with His lost lamb because of the prayers my mother prayed for me.

I do believe wholeheartedly that my mother's prayers were answered. Her prayers never wavered. Her love never failed. She persevered when the future looked bleak for her eldest child's faith walk. Never underestimate the power of a parent's prayer. Our key verse declares, "The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results." If you are a parent of a wandering child, hold fast to this verse in your mind and pray for your child.

God hears. He answers. I know this to be true because I was child who wandered, but was brought back by the fervent prayers of a praying parent and the loving hand of God. *Encouragement for Today*

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Every night my mother prays for me. As she closes my door, I can always hear her say, "Thank Heaven he's in bed!" *Humor, arr.*

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Did you hear about the new 3 million dollar Florida State Lottery? The winner gets 3 dollars a year for a million years. *Laugh & Lift*

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At Saddleback Church, Rick Warren told church leaders: "The two ways to make new people stick in your church is to get them in a group and to get them in a ministry."

That's an important reminder to all church leaders, who see too many folks come in the front door and then, all too soon, wander out the back door. It simply isn't enough to provide engaging worship experiences and great preaching. We need to disciple people, and that means involving them in the body and in service.

"Why not make that a priority in your place of worship? Work with your leadership to develop effective ways to involve new members and attendees in small groups, and find a place for them to serve as soon as possible." *Preaching Now*

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I will ***not*** trust my money to those people at Fifth Third Bank. If they knew anything about math, they'd call it the One and Two-Thirds Bank.