

# MONDAY

## Bible verses through the Gospel of John

**JOHN 8:48** *The Jews then said, "That clinches it. We were right all along when we called you a Samaritan and said you were crazy—demon-possessed!"*

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"The churches are fighting one another over theological debates, when we should be fighting for people who can't read or don't have enough to eat...I think you can profess the Apostles' Creed until Jesus returns, but if you don't love somebody, you were never a Christian." - *Rich Mullins, via Laugh & Lift*

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A Harley biker is riding by the zoo in Washington, DC when he sees a little girl leaning into the lion's cage. Suddenly, the lion grabs her by the cuff of her jacket and tries to pull her inside to slaughter her, under the eyes of her screaming parents.

The biker jumps off his Harley, runs to the cage and hits the lion square on the nose with a powerful punch.

Whimpering from the pain the lion jumps back letting go of the girl, and the biker brings her to her terrified parents, who thank him endlessly. A reporter has watched the whole event.

The reporter addressing the Harley rider says, 'Sir, this was the most gallant and brave thing I've seen a man do in my whole life.'

The Harley rider replies, 'Why, it was nothing, really, the lion was behind bars.. I just saw this little kid in danger and acted as I felt right.'

The reporter says, 'Well, I'll make sure this won't go unnoticed. I'm a journalist, you know, and tomorrow's paper will have this story on the front page... So, what do you do for a living and what political affiliation do you have?'

The biker replies, 'I'm a U.S. Marine and a Republican.' The journalist leaves.

The following morning the biker buys the paper to see if it indeed brings news of his actions, and reads, on the front page:

U.S. MARINE ASSAULTS AFRICAN IMMIGRANT AND STEALS HIS LUNCH. *unknown*

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Did you hear about the teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on? He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. When the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and, sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on-this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots."

She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to. Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them."

She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots..."

*Alan Smith via Laugh & Lift*

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I took a part time job as an opinion poll sampler. On my very first call, I introduced myself, "Hello, this is a telephone poll."

The man replied, "Yeeeah, and I'm a street lamp!" *Laugh & Lift*

## TUESDAY

**John 8:49-51** *Jesus said, "I'm not crazy. I simply honor my Father, while you dishonor me. I am not trying to get anything for myself. God intends something gloriously grand here and is making the decisions that will bring it about. I say this with absolute confidence. If you practice what I'm telling you, you'll never have to look death in the face."*

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I am an airport chaplain, but have previously served two Virginia churches as their Pastor. As editor of ChapNotes, I'm now running a series of articles from ministers on "How I Prepare Sermons." You are invited to enjoy the answers being received! I am hopeful Pastors will be inspired to add some of these ideas to their own method of sermon building.

I will consider sermon preparation topics from any interested Pastor who chooses to share their system with us. Simply drop me an email at [t.airportchaplain@verizon.net](mailto:t.airportchaplain@verizon.net)

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"I try to usually preach in series- this allows me to preach within context and it helps to build on each precept. Secondly, I go to my text and use a similar method to the Bible study method called SOAP (Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer)- I read through the passage and prayerfully determine the part that I am to preach from. Next, I ask- what is this text about; after that I ask, How can I apply this today (personally, as families, and as a church)-this sometimes calls for going and sitting in the pews and looking on from the perspective of the congregation. Then I prayerfully begin to put it together.

I have to give Dr. Wayne McDill the credit for the actual writing of the message. I try to teach one major point or theme throughout the message. I also try to limit the number of points; because Dr. McDill taught us for each point we should: have an explanation of the point, an argumentation for the point, an illustration (both modern day/historical) of the point, and an application for the point.

One of the things that I try to keep in the forefront of my mind; is what I have gleaned from reading about the preaching of Charles Spurgeon. Mr. Spurgeon said that we should allow every text to lead us to Jesus. This is never to be just an academic exercise- it is to bring our Glorious Savior into view.

*Tracy Fletcher, Hendersonville, NC*

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A lion woke up one morning feeling really rowdy and mean. He went out and cornered a small monkey and roared, "Who is mightiest of all jungle animals?"

The trembling monkey says, "You are, mighty lion!"

Later, the lion confronts a ox and fiercely bellows, "Who is the mightiest of all jungle animals?"

The terrified ox stammers, "Oh great lion, you are the mightiest animal in the jungle!"

On a roll now, the lion swaggers up to an elephant and roars, "Who is mightiest of all jungle animals?"

Fast as lightning, the elephant snatches up the lion with his trunk, slams him against a tree half a dozen times leaving the lion feeling like it'd been run over by a safari wagon. The elephant then stomps on the lion till it looks like a corn tortilla and ambles away.

The lion lets out a moan of pain, lifts his head weakly and hollers after the elephant - "Just because you don't know the answer, you don't have to get so upset about it!" *Humor Digest*

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There was a telephone study of recent appliance purchasers, where one 93-year-old respondent was asked about extended warranties.

Interviewer: "And why do you say you would 'definitely not' purchase an extended warranty for your new dishwasher?"

Respondent: "Honey, at my age I don't even buy green bananas." *Humor Digest*

## WEDNESDAY

**John 8:52-53** *At this point the Jews said, "Now we know you're crazy. Abraham died. The prophets died. And you show up saying, 'If you practice what I'm telling you, you'll never have to face death, not even a taste.' Are you greater than Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you think you are!"*

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Finally got around to going fishing this morning but after a while I ran out of worms. Then I saw a cottonmouth snake with a frog in his mouth... and frogs are good bass bait.

Knowing the snake couldn't bite me with the frog in his mouth; I grabbed him right behind the head, took the frog and put it in my bait bucket. Now the dilemma was how to release the snake without getting bit. I grabbed my bottle of Jose Cuervo and poured a little Tequila in its mouth. His eyes rolled back and he went limp. I released him into the River without incident and carried on my fishing with the frog.

A little later, I felt a nudge on my foot. There was that same snake... with two frogs in his mouth.

*Humor Digest*

Mary and her husband Jim had a dog named 'Lucky.' Lucky was a real character. Whenever Mary and Jim had company come for a weekend visit they would warn their friends to not leave their luggage open because Lucky would help himself to whatever struck his fancy. Inevitably, someone would forget and something would come up missing.

Mary or Jim would go to Lucky's toy box in the basement and there the treasure would be, amid all of Lucky's other favorite toys Lucky always stashed his finds in his toy box and he was very particular that his toys stay in the box.

It happened that Mary found out she had breast cancer.. Something told her she was going to die of this disease.....in fact; she was just sure it was fatal.

She scheduled the double mastectomy, fear riding her shoulders. The night before she was to go to the hospital she cuddled with Lucky. A thought struck her.....what would happen to Lucky? Although the three-year-old dog liked Jim, he was Mary's dog through and through. If I die, Lucky will be abandoned, Mary thought. He won't understand that I didn't want to leave him! The thought made her sadder than thinking of her own death.

The double mastectomy was harder on Mary than her doctors had anticipated and Mary was hospitalized for over two weeks. Jim took Lucky for his evening walk faithfully, but the little dog just drooped, whining and miserable.

Finally the day came for Mary to leave the hospital. When she arrived home, Mary was so exhausted she couldn't even make it up the steps to her bedroom. Jim made his wife comfortable on the couch and left her to nap..

Lucky stood watching Mary but he didn't come to her when she called. It made Mary sad but sleep soon overcame her and she dozed.

When Mary woke for a second she couldn't understand what was wrong. She couldn't move her head and her body felt heavy and hot. But panic soon gave way to laughter when Mary realized the problem. She was covered, literally blanketed, with every treasure Lucky owned! While she had slept, the sorrowing dog had made trip after trip to the basement bringing his beloved mistress all his favorite things in life.

He had covered her with his love.

Mary forgot about dying. Instead she and Lucky began living again, walking further and further together every day. It's been 12 years now and Mary is still cancer-free. Lucky He still steals treasures and stashes them in his toy box but Mary remains his greatest treasure. *Daily Encounter*

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As the woman was instructing the new maid on the great care required in handling certain valuable household objects. She pointed to the dining room and said with great satisfaction, "That table goes back to Louis the Fourteenth."

"Oh, that's nothing," the maid interjected. "My whole living-room set goes back to Sears the fifteenth."  
*Humor Digest*

## THURSDAY

**John 8:54-56** *Jesus said, "If I turned the spotlight on myself, it wouldn't amount to anything. But my Father, the same One you say is your Father, put me here at this time and place of splendor. You haven't recognized him in this. But I have. If I, in false modesty, said I didn't know what was going on, I would be as much of a liar as you are. But I do know, and I am doing what he says. Abraham—your 'father'—with jubilant faith looked down the corridors of history and saw my day coming. He saw it and cheered."*

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Baseball Wisdom (in honor of Opening Day)

Throw high risers at the chin; throw peas at the knees; throw it here when they're lookin' there; throw it there when they're lookin' here. --Satchel Paige

Throw strikes. Home plate don't move. --Satchel Paige

Swing at the strikes. --Yogi Berra

Don't forget to swing hard, in case you hit the ball. --Woodie Held

There are two theories on hitting the knuckleball. Unfortunately, neither of them works. --Charlie Lau

The way to catch a knuckleball is to wait until the ball stops rolling and then pick it up. --Bob Uecker

Never trust a base runner who's limping. Comes a base hit and you'll think he just got back from Lourdes. --Joe Garagiola

Don't park in the spaces marked, "Reserved for Umpires." --John McSherry

When I first became a manager, I asked Chuck [Tanner] for advice. He told me, "Always rent." --Tony Larussa

The secret of managing is to keep the guys who hate you away from the guys who are undecided. -- Casey Stengel, *Humor Digest*

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"I would like some vitamins for my son," the mother said as she walked into the pharmacy.

"Vitamins A, B, or C?" asks the pharmacist.

"It doesn't matter, he can't read yet." *Humor Digest*

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A Doctor was addressing a large audience in Tampa. 'The material we put into our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. High fat diets can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long-term harm caused by the germs in our drinking water.

However, there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and we all have eaten, or will eat it. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?'

After several seconds of quiet, a 75-year-old man in the front row raised his hand, and softly said, 'Wedding Cake.' *Humor Digest*

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I got a new stick deodorant today. The instructions said: "Remove cap and push up bottom."

It hurts and I can barely walk, but whenever I pass gastric gas, the room smells lovely! *Humor Digest*

## FRIDAY

**John 8:57** *The Jews said, "You're not even fifty years old—and Abraham saw you?"*

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Being an alcoholic was never on my list of things I wanted to be when I grew up. Neither was being short, but I didn't escape either one of those. Now, with the perspective of over twenty years of living sober, I realize I drank like an alcoholic from the time I started, which was while I was in high school. If a place between sober and drunk existed, it never showed up on my radar. Growing up in New Orleans, the city where if you're not experiencing a hurricane, you're drinking one of the colorful rum drinks with the same name at Pat O'Brien's, any occasion could justify a celebratory toast. Birthdays, holidays, Tuesdays ...

For most of my adult life, God and I met at family reunions - Easter and Christmas. I didn't make an effort to exclude Him from my life; I just didn't bother to include Him. Drinking eased my pain and elevated my happiness. Why would I need or miss God? I didn't. At least not until, like my character Leah in my novel *Walking on Broken Glass*, I experienced something so unexpected and painful, that no amount of drinking filled the void. For Leah, it was the death of her child. For me, it was when one of my twin girls was born with Down Syndrome. And, like Leah, I lashed out at God. Dared Him to heal my child. pummeled Him with anger. then ignored Him for years.

But none of it—not my drinking, not my raging, not my rejecting-separated me from God's love. He used my weakness to demonstrate His strength. Over the past twenty years, I've come to realize that we all have strongholds, areas

in our lives that prevent us from having a full relationship with God. Things that, even though we know they're wrong, we hold on to so tightly, we can't reach out to grab God's hands. Alcohol, gambling, food, drugs, shopping, pornography, power, gossip, status, anger, self-pity. Until we unclench our hands and let them go, these strongholds will control us.

Ultimately, God didn't heal my daughter; instead, through her, He healed me. And to prove His never-ending pursuit of me, He brought me into a relationship with Him through a recovery program as I reached the end of myself, laid down my stronghold, and took hold of His hand.

He can deliver you too. Whenever you are ready to put down your "bottle," whatever that may be today, and reach for His hand? *Encouragement for Today.*

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When young José, newly arrived in the United States, made his first trip to Yankee Stadium, there were no tickets left for sale. Touched by his disappointment, a friendly ticket salesman found him a perch near the American flag.

Later, José wrote home enthusiastically about his experience: "And the Americans, they are so friendly! Before the game started, they all stood up and looked at me and sang 'José, can you see?'"

*Humor Digest*

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You're going to work. If you're going to do a job, do it right. The easiest way isn't always the best way. Shortcuts almost always lead to more work -- and harder work -- for someone, somewhere down the line. Learn to savor and appreciate the joy that comes from doing a job well. Like my Dad used to say, "The only thing that's good half-done is a steak."

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Groups of Americans were travelling by tour bus through Holland. As they stopped at a cheese farm, a young guide led them through the process of cheese making, explaining that goat's milk was used. She showed the group a lovely hillside where many goats were grazing.

'These,' she explained, 'are the older goats put out to pasture when they no longer produce.'

She then asked, 'What do you do in America with your old goats?'

A spry old gentleman answered, 'They send us on bus tours!' *Humor Digest*