

Sunday School -- September 27, 2009

One of Martin Luther's congregants complained that he preached about grace all the time, asking, when are you going to preach about something else? Luther's reply was this: "I preach the gospel every week because by Monday you forget it."

Look at these Heroes of the Faith

**Noah** – Genesis 9:20-21

**David** -- 2 Samuel 24: 1-3

**Abraham** – Genesis 12:11-16

**Gideon** – Judges 8:22-28

Rebekah – Genesis 27:5-10

Peter – Acts 10:9-16

**Moses** – Exodus 4:10-13

Paul – Acts 15: 36-40

The ones in bold are mentioned in the "Hall of Fame" in Hebrews 11. What do they have in common? They are all screw-ups, yet God still looks with favor upon them. Why? How do most of the paragraphs begin? "By faith..." God is not impressed with our righteousness – Romans 3:27-28

**27**Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. **28**For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Read Samford "Stuff Christians Like..."

- Tattoos for God
- Subtly finding out if you drink beer too
- Rooting for secret Christians on "American Idol."
- Calling things postmodern
- Disguising gossip as prayer
- Riding in the cool van to the youth retreat
- Fearing that God will send you to Africa
- The Double Greeting

Dressing up for Church in College So it Looks Like You Went to Church

*If you live on campus at a Christian college, and you didn't go to church one Sunday and you want to go to the cafeteria for lunch, you better dress up.*

*You better throw on a pair of khakis or a skirt or something else that doesn't instantly scream "I am a sleepy heathen." You wear shorts? People are going to know you didn't go to church. You wear flip flops? People are going to know you didn't go to church.*

*It doesn't matter if you went to a Saturday night service or are going Sunday night or go to a church where jeans and flip flops are the norm, you're going to get some looks. And maybe at your school, people have developed highly sensitive "that dude dressed up so it would look like he went to church" radar. What to do then? Fear not. I came up with four new ways to look like you went to church.*

### **1. Carry bulletins with you.**

When you reach for a meal in your school cafeteria, casually drop a church bulletin out of your pocket. Act like you're surprised it's there, as if you just rushed in from church and forget you even had it with you.

### **2. Use loads of "church" words and puns.**

Everyone knows that on Sundays, the food they serve in college cafeterias is just the food no one ate during the week with a layer of cheese melted over it. Same thing happens at camp. That doesn't mean you can't describe it with really silly church words and puns. Say things like, "Our corn is an awesome corn, its grains, are on top of my plate." Or "I'm not sure I understand the systematic theological implications of sitting on this side of the cafeteria." People will over hear you, especially judgmental people because they have pretty phenomenal hearing, and will think, "Wow, that lady sure sounds churchy. She must have gone this morning."

### **3. Show up in a group.**

If you show up to the cafeteria alone, people are going to know you didn't go to church. That's why it's better to arrive in a group. There's great strength in numbers. Grab a few other friends that are going to the Sunday night service

or just went to bedside Baptist. Work out a plan and then show up all together as if you were on your way to a restaurant after church but then remembered the cafeteria is delicious too so instead headed there. Designate a "key carrier," who can swing a set of car keys around to give the impression there's a car involved. That adds a nice touch of realism.

#### **4. Wear a guitar.**

Forget looking like you went to church, pretend you actually played some music while you were there. Just walk through the line of food, grabbing things on your tray, knocking plates off with your guitar, bumping into people and saying, "whoa, sorry about that, musician here."

Hopefully those will work for you like they did for friends I had at Samford University. I personally didn't use these methods when I was there. I was too busy church hopping, but that's a whole other story.

Jesus does not honor the righteous (Pride, Smugness, Self-sufficiency)

The Pharisees – Matthew 23

The rich young ruler – Mark 10:17-22

The older brother – Luke 15

But he does the unrighteous (Brokenness, Humility, Dependence)

Woman at the well – John 4

Woman caught in adultery – John 8

Zacchaeus – Luke 19

Matthew – Matthew 9:9

Thief on the cross – Luke 23:32-43

He seeks repentance

I John 1:8-9

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and

purify us from all unrighteousness.

### He seeks humility

Luke 18:9-14

**9**To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: **10**"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11**The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12**I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

**13**"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

**14**"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

### He does not stand on ceremony

Matthew 15:10-20

**10**Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. **11**What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

**12**Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

**13**He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. **14**Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

**15**Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

**16**"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. **17**"Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? **18**But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' **19**For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. **20**These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'

## He dispenses grace

Matthew 20:1-16

**1**"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard. **2**He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

**3**"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. **4**He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' **5**So they went.

"He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. **6**About the eleventh hour he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?'

**7**" 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.'

**8**"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.'

**9**"The workers who were hired about the eleventh hour came and each received a denarius. **10**So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius.

**11**When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner.

**12**"These men who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

**13**"But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? **14**Take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same as I gave you. **15**Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

**16**"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

## He died for sinners

Romans 5:6-11

**6**You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7**Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. **8**But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**9**Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we

be saved from God's wrath through him! **10**For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11**Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Read Anne Biebel's letter; here is a young woman who by all appearance was an ideal Christian, but it was not until she acknowledged her sin that healing began.

John Calvin: "If one had to contribute even only a pebble to one's own salvation, one would lie in lifelong fear that one's pebble was just not big enough."