

How to Make Preaching a Joke

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 October 2024

Preacher: Brother Jon Beauchemin

[0:00] Can I have some good news? I have a one-page outline. It is on both sides, but the bad news is I lost my glass a couple months ago.

I haven't replaced them, so I cannot see the clock. So we could be here a while. Let's go to Genesis chapter 19. And once we're all there, starting in verse number 12.

And the men said unto Lot, that is, the angels that came to rescue him, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.

For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord. And the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place. For the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for just dragging me out of the miry pit you dragged me out of and giving me a chance to preach tonight.

[1:25] Please just get me out of the way and just use me to be a blessing to these people. Please just help me to only say what you want me to say and not say anything else.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. A lot of preachers, they'll start off their sermons with a stupid, unrelated joke. I'm sure you've all heard it. So I think I'll do that tonight, because, you know, I want to get you all out of my side.

I want to give you all an easy laugh. Now, a lot of preachers... This is the joke, by the way. A lot of preachers will start off their sermons with stupid, unrelated jokes.

That's great. Yeah. Keep thinking about it. You'll get it later. Now, the title of this message, that wasn't actually an unrelated joke.

The title of this message is How to Make Preaching a Joke. Now, everything I say in this sermon will be applicable to preachers, but I'm going to aim it at you, because it's also applicable to all of us. And by you, I mean me, too.

[2:27] Don't worry. But if I ever preach it to preachers, I'll aim it at them. Does that sound fair? Now, there's a couple ways to make preaching a joke. And the easiest way, the way that most people do it, is just don't take it seriously.

It's the easiest way to get out of it. And that's exactly what we read just now in Genesis chapter 19. If you look back at verse 14, Lot gave a message.

He said, up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. There's plenty of sermons to be preached about that. But what we're going to focus on tonight is the fact, I mean, you talk about having a message.

Like, I mean, I got a message tonight, and I hope the Lord gave it to me. But if you don't act on it, I mean, you're not going to die tonight. Probably not. I would hope not.

I pray not. But Lot here, I mean, if you read the passage, I mean, it looks like this takes place late at night. And I believe it says later in the passage that the destruction comes from the Lord pretty early in the morning.

[3:36] So he's got maybe an hour, two hours until this happens. So you talk about an urgent message. And, I mean, Lot believed it. Like, he left. So he wasn't. And that specifically about him wasn't the problem.

But his listeners, they're just like, eh, you know, whatever. It might be true. It might not be true. It probably isn't true. That's a big problem with a lot of sermons today. There's just no urgency.

It's all just nice. It's just coping and sharing and how to cope with stress and be a good boy. If you've ever seen a megachurch, there's a big church right down the street from where I used to live called Mosaic.

And it always gave me a laugh, this pastor. He writes books. Here are some of his choice selections. The Seven Frequencies of Communication by Erwin Raphael McManus reveals the seven types of communication the world uses to hear and be heard.

When you unlock your frequency, you unleash your potential. All right. That's good preaching. Can I get an amen, anybody? I mean, talk about an unurgent message.

[4:43] And here's another one. Here's a good one. It's called the Mind Shift with the tagline, it doesn't take a genius to think like one. That's a good one. Mental toughness, mental clarity, and mental health all have one thing in common.

The journey begins in your mind. But don't worry. Don't worry. He's got a book about Jesus. He's got a book about Jesus. He is a real preacher, apparently. That book is called The Genius of Jesus. And it's a groundbreaking manifesto decoding the phenomenon of genius through the life of Jesus of Nazareth, revealing the untapped potential within every human being. Isn't that wonderful? Don't y'all just feel so nice and happy and just like a big, big warm glow? Doesn't that feel good, everybody? Isn't that fun? It's fun when you don't take preaching seriously when it just becomes pop psychology.

You can build a big congregation that way. Make everybody feel good. Make them, teach them how to solve their little problems. You know, I mean, Jesus, I mean, yeah, he was a genius.

[5:46] He was a great teacher. You know, and he died on the cross and like did some stuff. But the main thing is we have to unleash your potential and you have to learn from the genius of Jesus.

There's an old story about a chaplain who's going into a D-Day with a battalion. He was a British chaplain and he said, Well, little boys, before we go into battle, would you like to hear a sermon or a good joke?

And one of the GIs said, Well, if that's how you feel about it, let's have the joke. That's unfortunately the way that a lot of preachers view their ministry today. You know, if they can make people laugh, they've done their job.

If they can make people feel good, they did their job, you know. There's another joke. I promise you'll get more serious later. But again, I'm just telling jokes right now to get you all on my side and get you all relaxed.

And I'll stick to you later. So a pastor dies and goes to heaven. And he's standing in line. This is just a story. This is not doctrine. He's chatting with a man in front who's a New York taxi driver.

[6:49] And as he gets closer, he sees St. Peter giving everyone going into heaven a robe, wings, and a staff. And he thinks, Well, I must be getting something pretty good. I mean, not like this taxi driver over here.

So the taxi driver, he goes up. He gets a silk robe, mink wings, and a platinum staff. And the pastor thinks, Well, I mean, what am I going to get? Is everything going to be solid gold? He gets up to St. Peter.

St. Peter reaches in his bag. This isn't doctrine. He reaches in his bag and gives the pastor a burlap robe, polyester wings, and a wood staff. And he looks at St. Peter, shocked, and he says, What is this?

That taxi driver. He got these great gifts. I have these cheap knockoffs. And St. Peter said, Well, when you preached, people slept.

But when he drove, people prayed. Let's go to Isaiah chapter 30. I'm going to do a bit of turning tonight. Isaiah chapter 30 and verse 8.

[7:53] Here the Lord says to Isaiah, Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, forever and ever.

But this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord, which say to the seers, See not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.

Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. This is, again, they're not taking it seriously.

They only wanted to hear positive things, which means that they didn't believe it. I mean, if they had believed the negative stuff, then, you know, they would have believed the whole thing. So you can't just have, you can't have a battery with two positive poles.

You need a positive and a negative to get a charge. But they just wanted to hear the parts that made them feel good, like, oh, you know, judge not. That's in the Bible. It doesn't matter what the context is.

[8:53] It's in there, you know. Or, you know, Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd. So I can just do whatever I want all the time, and God will still love me, and just let me do whatever I want, and let me into heaven anyway, because I didn't kill anyone and rob any banks, you know.

So that basically makes me a good person. And if we go to Ezekiel chapter 20, just a quick little reference here. Ezekiel chapter 20 and verse 49.

Here, Ezekiel has been given a message that's a type of hell. And in verse 49, Then said I, Ah, Lord God, they say to me, doth he not speak parables? Hell is just a parable.

It's just separation from God, you know. You don't need to take it that seriously. Like, if you're just separated from God, I mean, what does that even mean, you know? Like, if you're an unsaved man being separated from God, I mean, that sounds like a good deal, you know. If God is just here to stop me from having fun, like, I mean, of course I want to be separated from him.

That's no threat. That's a joke. It's just a silly joke. It's like if a parent told their kid, just go outside, I'm separating from you, and I'm not going to check on you or ever punish you for anything you do.

[10:02] I mean, that's a fun afternoon for a little kid. Now, I'll just flip over a couple pages to Ezekiel chapter 33. It's not always obvious when someone isn't taking the word of God seriously.

Sometimes it looks awful good. Sometimes it looks like they're doing the right thing. Go into verse 30 right at the end of the chapter. Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses.

And speak one to another, everyone to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. I mean, that sounds good. They want to hear from the Lord. What more could you ask for? And they come unto thee as the people cometh.

And they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument.

For they hear thy words, but they do them not. Look, these people, they said, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. They were inviting people out to church.

[11:11] Where that leads to the average modern Christian, I don't know, but I sure know I don't want to stay there. I mean, they looked like good, faithful churchgoers. I know we're all here on Wednesday night, you know. But just because people come to church, that's because they invite other people to church, doesn't mean that they're going to do what they hear.

It's a young couple invited their pastor over for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the minister asked their young son what they were having. Goat, said the little boy.

Goat, replied the pastor. Are you sure about that? Yes, said the little boy. I heard Dad say to Mom, we might as well have the old goat for dinner today as any other day. Now here's the second way to make preaching a joke.

You take it seriously, but not too seriously. You don't completely ignore it, but you don't quite go all the way. You see this in Numbers chapter 22. I'm sure most of you should know where I'm going with this.

Finding Balaam. Let's go to verse 12. If you know the story, you should know it.

[12:18] The men from Balak came to Balaam to ask him to curse the children of Israel. Then that night, God appears unto Balaam.

It says in verse 12, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed. And Balaam rose up in the morning and said unto the princes of Balak, The Lord said unto me, Thou shalt not go with them, thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.

Is that what he said? That's not what he said. He said, Get you into your land, for the Lord refuses to give me a leave to go with you. That's nice and open-ended. Might just leave a little lead out there.

Maybe you can negotiate a little deal there. If you look in verse 18, look at this. This is good preaching right here. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do less or more.

What a pious fellow. What a great preacher. I'm sure he meant it. I'm sure he meant it. Except he already had gone beyond the word of the Lord. He already cut out two-thirds of the message that God gave him.

[13:24] That's not the only time this happens in the Bible. Let's go to 1 Samuel chapter 15. It was God's anointed. The King Saul.

He was anointed directly by the Lord. Go to... Just look at verse 3 real quick. It's the Lord giving direct orders to Saul.

It's pretty cool. God doesn't speak directly to too many people these days. But he did right here. He said, Flip over real quick to verse 26.

See what happened. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee. For thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. Well, I mean, what happened?

Did Saul stay at home? Did he go to Amalek? Did he make a marriage alliance and start falling down and worshiping their gods? No. No. He did almost everything that God told him to do.

[14:35] Actually calculated it out. But in verse 3, the Lord gives him the command, and he only ignored one word. I mean, that's pretty good. I calculated it. That's 96.7%.

I mean, that's an A, maybe even an A-plus depending on what gradient system you use. Surely that's good enough, you know? I mean, I'm sure Saul figured as long as he paid attention to most of the words of God, it would all be fine.

I mean, you know. Like, there, I mean, sure, he like went and did it, you know. But it wasn't like that serious. Like some people, like Samuel, I mean, he just, you know, goes all the way.

And that's fine for him. But, I mean, if I ignore just one word, I mean, what's the big deal? It's fine.

You know, I'm still taking it seriously. I'm still going and smiting almost everything that God told me to smite.

He kept excusing himself and blaming everyone else. When he finally did admit that he had done wrong, he didn't want to bear the consequences. He thought he did right. He really did. He didn't understand why Samuel was so mad at him.

[15:33] If you look in verse 24, Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned. Okay, so he admits it. For I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

So it wasn't my fault. I mean, sure, I didn't do everything right. But it wasn't my fault. I had pressure on me. I didn't listen when the preacher talked about how to cope with stress.

Now, I grew up in a church where we took God seriously. But the Bible was overruled by commentaries and lexicons and the original Greek.

I'm going to do a little something here. You don't have to turn to this passage, but I'm going to preach to you a little bit like my old pastor used to preach. I'm just going to go to John chapter 5, because the pastor was in that passage when I was writing this outline.

Okay, so the first thing that you have to do is you have to smile a lot. Like, after everything you say, isn't that wonderful? And you have to get your diction exactly right.

[16:37] It has to be very dramatic. You have to really put some life into the text. Like this. After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the movement of the water.

For an angel went down. Actually, I would just skip that verse, because we didn't believe that verse was part of the inspired text. And a certain man was there which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

And he goes on like that and says, you know, There is some doubt among the commentators whether verse four is part of the text or not.

But the general principle is that the church should reach the poor and needy as Christ did. And let our light so shine that men may see the spark of divinity within us all and join us in the blessed kingdom of Christ.

[17:55] Let us pray. It is beautiful. It is pious. It sounds so nice. And you are preaching the gospel. You are preaching the Bible. I mean, you know, I got saved hearing him preach.

He does preach the gospel. But it does not just ring quite right. It is not quite as serious as it could be. And any time the original Greek teaches something else, well, we have to make sure to mention that.

Otherwise, people will not know how wise I am. And then I really don't believe most of what I am saying. I just believe in some general principles a commentator extracted from the text.

You know, the words of God are mostly pure. And we can have relative certainty about what the original says. But we can't know for sure. And all we can agree on are these general principles.

And that's enough. That's enough. I mean, Saul didn't get kicked off the throne because he ignored one word of God. That didn't happen. And that's just how so many churches today are.

[18:59] So many preachers and so many congregations. Now, there's a third way of making preaching a joke. You take it seriously. And you don't add to it.

You don't subtract from it. You don't change it. But you have a motive besides learning the truth when you hear it. I believe we should... Actually, we're not. Never mind. Sorry. I thought we were still in Numbers 22.

You don't have to turn there. But I'm going to go there real quick. Just touched on this earlier. But any old motive will do. You know, you want to make money, make friends, build a ministry, promote your newest book, find a girlfriend.

You know, whatever you want to do. That'll do just fine if you want to make preaching a joke. See in verse 16 of Numbers 22, And they came to Balaam and said unto him, Thus saith Balak, the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me.

For I will promote thee unto very great honor, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me. Come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me, this people. Talk about an opportunity. I mean, the king came up to you and offered you a blank check to do something you knew you shouldn't do.

[20:07] I mean, probably be tempted. You might not do it, but you sure think about it. I know I would. I know I'd try not to. You know, I'd pray through it. But, I mean, we've all got an old man.

He'd think about it. He would. Let's jump over to Acts chapter 8. Verse 9.

Here we're seeing Simon the sorcerer. Verse 9 we read, But there was a certain man called Simon, which before a time in the same city used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.

To whom they all gave heed from the least of the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Then Simon himself believed also. And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Simon believed. He was baptized.

[21:13] He continued with Philip. He stayed in church. There's no indication from the text that he went back to his sorceries. It says he believed. Jump over to verse 18.

And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power. That on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. Peter didn't say he had faked his conversion. He didn't say that he faked his belief.

As I read the text, and there might be some dispute about this, but it seems like Simon really was saved, but his heart wasn't right. He wanted the power of God.

[22:18] He believed in the power of God, otherwise he wouldn't have wanted it. I mean, he saw that it worked. He believed it. But he just wanted it for himself, and that was the problem. Now, the only way to make it, and make preaching not a joke, is to believe the words, believe them just as they are, and put God and his will above your own.

Go to 1 Samuel 3. It's the last reference we'll turn to. Here's some good preaching from priest Eli to young Samuel.

Verse number 17. And he, that is Eli, said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

And Samuel told him every wit, and hid nothing from him. And if you know the story, it's unsheated damnation. Eli hadn't rebuked his sons, and God said, Therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.

That's verse 14. After Samuel told him that, Eli said, It is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good. And that's pretty rough.

[23:39] That's a rough thing to hear, but Eli accepted it and believed it, even though it cut his own throat. And as we see, he trained up Samuel well. In verse 19. And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

And despite Eli's shortcomings with his sons, it's certainly implied from the text that he raised Samuel right, and he taught him to believe all the words of God and let none of them fall to the ground.

Now, there are more verses than you know in the Bible that stabbed me right. Stab me, sorry, that stabbed me. They get me right in the gut.

But woe be to me, woe be to anyone who doesn't take it seriously, or takes it mostly seriously, but not all, or takes it seriously, but whose heart and will is against God. That's all.

That's all you can do is just sometimes just accept the word of the Lord, even when it crosses you, even when you don't want to take it seriously, even when you want to find a new interpretation, get a second opinion from the original Greek.

[24:44] And that's how to make preaching a joke. That's right. Thank you, John.

Did a good job. And I might add, not really add, but just confirm that thought, that soul thought is probably more applicable to everybody in this room than you may be thinking, yep, that's it.

That's them out there in the mega churches. They're not taking it serious. It's just a game. But it's you and me, right here and right now, that need to be receiving with meekness the engrafted word and desiring it as newborn babes and taking it in and letting it change our hearts and our lives.

And so a good thought. Appreciate that. Before we leave, I was struck just toward the end there when he mentioned something that before service, there was nobody here at the church but me and a man came into the building and I didn't know who it would have been.

It was a little early for anybody else, but the doors were open so he found his way in here and he's looking for a bathroom and so I said, I want to, you know, a lot goes through my mind about what kind of person this is and so, but I said, go ahead, right there it is, just don't make a mess.

[26:07] And he said, oh no, no, I won't, okay. So then he came back in my office and said, can I sit down? And my mind says right away, he's just going to try to get something from me. That's the kind of person he seemed to be.

So he sat down and he started giving me all of his woes and all, I mean, it was a list of all these problems and I listened for a little while but I realized it was getting to the end of this conversation. It wasn't going to go very far and I thought, I got to get some kind of gospel, something in his hand or something in, some shot there, you know, and so I did, I tried to and he dodged it and then we brought it back again and I was able to get something in there and he's telling me how good of a guy he is and all these things and long story short, I got to say something about hell and I got to say something about a fire and I just said to him, I said, have you ever stuck your hand in a fire and like left it there?

and he right away says, you know, well, I had my hand blown off, of course, and he did, he had a stump right here for a hand, it was gone and I said, but I'm not talking about that, I said, and he's like, well, my foot, I can't even feel anything in my foot, I can stick that in a fire, I said, see, you're trying to dodge it, you don't want to be in a fire, you're talking about ways that you can't feel the flame, I'm talking about feeling the torment, the Bible calls it, of this flame and he just kind of got quiet and he talked about being a good person, well, if my girlfriend's there, then I'm fine with being there, I said, you're not listening to me, you're just not, you're not hearing me at all and that struck me when he said about making it a joke because he just didn't take it serious that somebody was offering him the truth from the word of God and I told him, all your problems in life, they're not necessarily just going to go away, they probably won't but if you can, if you can trust Jesus Christ, and have your sins forgiven and receive eternal life, when that day comes to fruition, you'll look back on this and say, oh,

I'm so glad I took care of that and he wanted me to give him money and give him food and all of that so I prayed with him and let him go but there was one that had an opportunity right here, right now, tonight and he just wasn't taking it serious because he was looking for some other things and so may that not be the case in our hearts and in our lives that we just let some things go right through our ears and we don't open them up to hear and receive the word of God because we want other things in this life, something that's more exciting to us so good message, thank you John, for that and if that was blessing to you, make sure you tell him and encourage him for preaching first time.

[28:43] like thank you so much for watching and see you for being here and recording if I made that almost learn so let me take pictures from my life and just pour on a little bit of and then on and I'll stop loving them and hear coming so the way that it should be and his kill is are