

Untitled (48)

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[0:00] Good. Good morning, church. So he walked into church. He sat down. He had a hat on when he came into church. He sat down and he didn't take his hat off. He just left his hat on. And that wasn't good, you know. So the usher went over and said, excuse me, sir, but this church is about the service is about ready to start. Would you please remove your hat?

He says, no, I'm going to leave my hat on. Oh, my goodness. So the usher looked around, spotted the senior warden and said, we've got a problem here. This guy's got his hat on. The service is about ready to start. The senior warden says, I'll handle that. He went over to the fellow and he said, excuse me, but the choir is about ready to come in. Would you please remove your hat? He says, no, I'm going to leave my hat on.

Well, the senior warden had no choice but to go to the director of the altar guild, the real power of the church. We got a problem here with this guy in his hat. She says, I'll handle it. She went over and said, take you off your hat. He took it off right away, of course. Lovely service. Everything was nice. It was a lovely service. And at the end, people were shaking hands with the rector.

And they came and he came to this man. He said, something was going on this morning with your hat. What was that all about? And the guy says, Father, I've been coming to this church for seven months. I finally figured out how to get somebody to talk to me.

Boy, that's not true here. What a wonderful parish family you have. We have had more fun this weekend, sharing little snippets of our faith journey and drawing closer together.

[1:43] I shared with you the phenomena of the wizard of Oz. Here are these three guys and Dorothy. All have heart's desires. The lion and the scarecrow.

And they were told that their problem would be solved if they took this yellow road. And at the end of it, there's a guy there that will solve their problems. And of course, they got to the end and the guy was a phony. But by traveling together, by traveling together, their heart's desires were manifested.

How important it is for us to come together, to get to know each other and build trust relationships. We had a chance this weekend to share little parts of our faith journey. I grew up unchurched.

I never went to church as a child. I went to church once at a Catholic church. I was in love with Madeline Bergermeister. And she took me to her church Christmas Eve at Mass. It was wonderful. I mean, it was like stepping into Italy for a night.

It was just amazing. They all dressed Italy, you know, and talked Italy. But aside from that, I just didn't go to church. I got to college and fell in love with Marge in college.

[3:02] And her parents discovered that I had never been baptized. So I had to be baptized and confirmed so we could get on with a more important sacrament of marriage. But I did find the church in college. A professor invited me to a potluck supper at his church.

Thursday night. Oh my goodness, I had been eating this plastic food. And all of a sudden I found this banquet. It was fantastic. It was free. And it was good.

You know, like, of course, we've been enjoying food all this weekend. I mean, church people know how to eat, right? Good dinners. Great. I think my first date with Marge, I took her to the church for a potluck supper dinner.

It was a good way to start her. But I also found that church was a good place to meet people. It was good for business. So I got to be an usher so I could shake hands with the important people as they came in.

Then I became a chalice bearer. We called them chalice bearers, now a Eucharistic minister. I found that I could get up there right on the stage and show off. I could show off my apparel. It was great. I became a vestry person and senior warden.

[4:16] My career went well. I'm a former newspaper man. Then I edited a golf magazine, covered the PGA circuit, and then joined Goodyear as our editor of their external magazine.

And they finally sent me to Washington, D.C., where I was head of a region for Goodyear and public relations and government relations. I covered from Philadelphia to Miami and west to Texas. I had two blimps to play around with.

And it was a great job. Everything was going well in our life. I can remember boasting to my father-in-law that things are really going well for us. My priorities are right. My job comes first, second, third, fourth, and fifth.

Civic activities and church come next because they're good for business. And then March. And I said, those are my priorities, and they're working very well. My father-in-law said, well, how about your two daughters?

Where are they on your list? And I said, well, they're on March's, and she does a great job. And it really worked well for us. Everything was fine. My office was in the National Press Building in Washington.

[5:17] And one day this man comes in. I don't know how he got by my secretary, but he shows up at my desk. I didn't know whether he was a Ralph Nader spy or whether he just had a flat tire, but there he was.

But he was such an interesting guy. We had such a good time talking. Oh, I can't remember anything about him. We talked mostly about me, and it was so much good.

He was such a good, he was just a wonderful conversation. I talked about my job and my wife, and he just, it was a great meeting.

And about three weeks later, there he was again. His name was Bonnie. I can't remember anything else except his name was Bonnie. It just wasn't important. But again, we had a wonderful conversation.

We talked about mostly me, and it was just wonderful that we could just have that kind of a wonderful conversation. And then he came back a third time, and he said, you know, Tom, there's some men that get together on Monday morning in the Riggs Bank building, top floor, looking right down on the Department of Treasury, kitty corner to the White House.

[6:28] He said, there's a bunch of us that get together for breakfast in the morning. He said, I think you'd enjoy it. We have great speakers. He said, we're having Dr. Werner von Braun was going to be our speaker. Would you like to come?

And I said, well, what time does it start? And he said, well, we start at 730 in the morning. I said, oh, well, I said, you know, I live 15 miles away.

It's an hour and a half drive during rush hour. And, you know, I'm responsible. I'm responsible for Goodyear for a big area. That's a little too early for me. I find that I can get to work a little later in the morning and avoid some of that rush hour.

So thank you for asking me. But, you know, I would enjoy going. But he said, well, Tom, he said, there's some really neat guys that go to this. Dr. Werner von Braun is going to be our speaker, of course.

He said, Judge Oliver Gash leads it. He started ticking off. Ed Wilson, head of Wilson Meatpacking and Sporting Good. He said, we call him the Golf Ball King. He's a member of the group.

[7:34] He ticked off all kinds of important names that I had seen in the Washington Post. And he said, you know, Tom, these people need to know you. That's true.

They need to know me. I mean, I'm Goodyear's guy. I'll go. He didn't tell me it was a prayer breakfast meeting. What a sneaky guy he turned out to be.

And I started to go regularly. There was something about these men that I had never encountered before. There was a trust about them. When they looked at you and talked to you, there was a genuine interest in what they wanted to know and care about.

It was just amazing. We had a speaker that came to visit with us. He was from California. He was an architect in California.

And he came to talk to us. And he said that he had a job to do in Formosa. Formosa. Formosa. And to get to Formosa, he had to go to Hawaii and then on to Formosa for this job.

[8:43] And he had an army buddy in Hawaii. He was going to Hawaii first. An army buddy. And so he made arrangements to stop in and see this fellow. showed up and the guy says, I've got to go to a Chinese American church.

I'm involved with youth at this church. Come with me to that and then we'll go out and have dinner and get caught up. And that's what they did. And so this Walt McHuston, this architect, went then

from Hawaii to Formosa and then back to California to draw pictures or whatever architects do. And he gets a letter from the elders of this church in Hawaii. It says, our young people were very impressed with you.

We would like you to come and become our youth minister at our church. And he wrote back on letterhead and said, I don't do youth work.

I'm an architect. I have a family. We're settled down here in California. You can see by the letterhead I have my own business. Thank you. If I'm ever back in Hawaii, I'll certainly stop by and see your young people.

[9:51] But I don't do that. Thank you. He gets a wire back from the elders of this church and they say, we didn't realize that you were married and had a family.

We suggest that you come first because we don't know where we're going to house you. We suggest that you come first and get settled in. And then you can call, have your family come. And he got his secretary and said, what is this? I wrote this letter. Let me see the letter. It was very clear. I'm not going to go. I don't do this kind of stuff. He wrote back a very abrupt letter and said, I'm not coming.

I'm an architect. He gets a wire back from the elders and they say, we found a place for you to stay. So you can all come at once.

Please advise us when you will be arriving. So he went. They had a place up in the mountains and he said he took his family up there. Two kids were in bed and he was grouching to his wife about these crazy people that obviously didn't understand English.

[10:51] He said, no, you know, I'm not coming. He says, and I was just complaining and he said, I stopped for a minute and I said, of course, God, if this is something that you want me to do, I would do it.

And he turned and he looked at his wife and he said, we're going to Hawaii. And he sold his business and he sold their house and they moved to Hawaii and he started working with these young people.

At the church. And then he started working with the university, the kids in the university to draw them into small groups, just as we did this weekend to get closer and closer as they shared their life together and built trust.

And then he started working in government, doing the same thing, drawing people together and felt that he was a little over his head. So he came to Washington to kind of shadow the prayer breakfast fellowship.

There's prayer breakfast all over the country. You know, they're all over Washington. Of course, I see that there's two of them at the White House. There's four of them at the Pentagon. They're at the CIA. They're in the Senate.

[11:56] There are people gathering in prayer and prayer breakfast every week. Thank God that they're doing it. Thank God that the press doesn't have a circus over that issue.

But I was so impressed with his story that I took a walk with Walt McHouston. And I said, you know, I'm a good Christian. I've been senior warden of our church.

I mean, I headed up the every member canvas and made a lot of money for our church. I'm really a good Christian. But there's something about you guys that I just don't understand.

And he said, well, Tom, he said, I think it's good every once in a while. I think it's good every once in a while to just take an inventory. To just get down on your knees so you can do it off in your, you know, a private room or wherever you want.

But I think it's so important to just take inventory, to get down on your knees and thank God for sending his son to this earth that we have everlasting life. And to thank God that he will forgive us, forgive me for anything that I've done.

[13:04] And I want to repent and he will show me that way. And you're Lord of my life. Whatever you would have me do, any time, any place, the answer will always be yes.

And I said, well, that'll be a snap. I'll do that tonight. And I went home. I can still remember going up into the bedroom, closing the door. I knelt because that's what Anglicans do.

You know, we get down on our knees. And if we got pews with kneelers. But I got down on my knees and I whipped through that prayer. I thank God for sending Jesus to this earth that I might have everlasting life.

And I thanked him for forgiving my sins. They weren't that bad anyway, but I told him thanks, you know, for those. And I said, Lord, whatever you would have me do, any time, any place, you just ask.

And I've got to make sure it's you, Lord, that it's not my imagination. But if it's really you, whatever you want of me, you ask.

[14:02] And my mind wanders, Lord, from time to time, even in church, even during sermon time, my mind might wander.

But if it's really you, I'm here to tell you, Lord, that you just ask. And whatever you want, I'll certainly consider doing it.

I'd certainly consider doing it. That means that I'm Lord of my life. I had the worst time.

Church changed for me. All through our service, we talk about Jesus as Lord. And I couldn't say that anymore. Our hymns. I started choking on our hymns.

I'd be singing this song, and all of a sudden, I'd realize that for me, it's a lie. Jesus isn't Lord of my life. I am. I can remember taking a walk with Marge, and we were walking the dog.

[15:03] And I said, I am ready to really make a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord. But of course, I can't because of you and the girls. But I am ready to do something like that.

She said, what? What? I said, well, you know, God might send us to some jungle somewhere where the kids wouldn't have good schools. You couldn't get your hair done regularly.

It just wouldn't be fair. She was so pleased she had come up so high on my list of priorities, you know. And she said, you mind your business, and I'll mind mine. She said, I'm working on these same issues.

And she said, I'll tell you when I've reached a conclusion, and you tell me when you have. But don't hang this on me. This is your job. And I finally got to the point where I could really make that decision.

That I could really pray and mean it. Lord, whatever you would have me do, anytime, anyplace. The answer will always be yes. And how he has so many gifts for us.

[16:06] My life changed in so many ways. Just life got easier. There's a peace, as you know.

There's such a peace that's beyond understanding once you know that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.

So you're getting a new rector, right? He's going to be here next week. And you've been dealing with my dear brother, David.

Bishop David for a while. What a wonderful man of God he is, isn't he? You know, I can't think of anything that would bless him more. He loves you, you know.

It's been great being with you this weekend. And find out how much they love you. And you love for them. I can't think of a greater gift that you could give him on this weekend as he kind of moves, steps aside a little bit, and your new rector come in.

To take his hand during passing of the peace or at the end of the service or at the end of the lunch. Sometime, take his hand and look him in the eye and say, Bishop Dave, Jesus Christ is Lord of my life.

[17:15] I can't think of a better blessing that you could give him to just grab his hand, look him in the eye. Now, don't do it if you don't mean it.

You know, if you want another week or so, he's going to be around, you know, and you've got a new rector. It might be an interesting thing to tell the new rector, you know, walk up to him, this strange guy that's coming in here, and say, Hi, I'm Jim, and Jesus Christ is Lord of my life.

I mean, that would set him up for a good rectorship here, right? There's one other thing that I want to share with you that struck me while I was here.

You know, this is an area where, do you remember Jesus would preach whenever he wanted to talk to people?

He didn't have a PA system, right? He didn't have microphones. So what he did, he got out on a boat, right? And he talked because we know that sound travels on water.

[18:16] It's amazing. It's just amazing. So he would go out on a boat, and just think of everybody gathering around. They're listening to Jesus. And then a couple of people come down to the water's edge over here.

Maybe they're going to wash out some clothes. Maybe they're going to go fishing. And they look over, and they say, I wonder what's going on over there, right? And I'll bet you somebody in that

gathering goes over there and says, Come and see.

Come and see. What a great parish you have here. What a wonderful family you have here. And you have neighbors, and you have friends that don't have any idea what church is all about.

It's a real challenge, you know, to look at those people and realize that there's a hunger in them that could be filled here. There's a great hymn about that.

Maybe we could get the choir to sing this. Oh, I won't put you to that test. It's a great hymn. You'll catch this right away.

[19 : 29] It goes something like this. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. It goes like that. Y and I can do that. is that. that say. that does that. lip. lip. You know the name of that hymn?

Oh, it's not a hymn, is it? It's not a hymn. Do you know the name of that? Yep. Wonderland by Night. Strangers on the Shore. Strangers on the Shore. A great Kenny G song.

Strangers on the Shore. You hear that every once in a while, right? It's a popular song. Every time you hear that song on the radio or whatever, I really wanted to challenge you that there are strangers on the shore.

Those are folks that live on your street, people that you work with, people that you've gotten to know, and you need to share with them how wonderful this family is and invite them to come and join it.

Amen? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.