Sermons on Jesus:

The Humor of Christ

The most requested sermon I have on Jesus is “The Humor of Christ.” For too long His humor has been neglected, avoided, or denied. We have a misconception that religion and humor cannot mix.

I. JESUS WAS A HUMORIST

As a “boy preacher,” I nearly was whipped in Arkansas for stating this. Young preachers were advised, “Do not joke from the pulpit. Do not tell stories.” “Sour religion” comes from artistic pictures—not Scripture. Jesus cried but three times. You print the unusual—not the usual. Jesus was not a wimp—He did not “cry His life away.” Psychology says, “Be afraid of men who cannot laugh.” Jesus was not sad, tepid, or defeated. Without humor man is deficient as a human being. “Humor” and “human” come from the same source.

God has a sense of humor. He made the camel, the monkey, and you! John the Baptist did not joke. But Jesus did! Jesus attended at least twelve feasts. The first miracle was at a wedding.

Tragically, Christians (Luke 15) neither fast nor feast. The elder son could not fast or feast. Humor is exaggeration, and Jesus used exaggeration. Both the enemies and admirers of Jesus have been blind to His humor. Buddhism is slow suicide. Philosophy cannot laugh. Christianity is to be serious but not solemn. Abe Lincoln cried, but he was witty. One who cannot cry cannot laugh. Worship is not a funeral. Worship is a celebration.

II. OBSERVATIONS

Jesus used humor regarding His enemies. He was not cut out of “black cloth.” Jesus was a warm friend, full of good news (the gospel) and laughter. “Tell that old fox,” Jesus said. Peter in Acts 2 said, “It is too early to be drunk.” Humor allows openness and honesty. Humor disarms hostility. “Strain out a gnat and swallow a camel” is exaggerated humor.

The parables reflected humor. Twenty-one funny episodes are in Luke. Humor hits a man at his point of seriousness. The henpecked do not laugh. Will Rogers used humor to get people to think and not to be hurt. The expression of “blowing your horn” in giving, the illustration of “a splinter and a board,” the persistent widow—Jesus used them all to “tickle your funny bone.”

He used humor in dialogue. Jesus “nicknamed” His apostles. He always had the “surprise,” the hook in a parable. Humor preserves sanity, restores perspective, and allows spice in life. “Man only plays when he is human, and he is only human when he plays.”
CONCLUSION

Skeptics cannot see His deity; brethren have a problem with His humanity. There was no halo circling His head; His hands were not folded in prayer.

—Charles B. Hodge, Jr.