

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 173

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with "comedies". When you are stressed out and in need of relaxation, a "comedy" sometimes helps. Our word "comedy" comes from the Greek word "komoidia" and refers to a humorous speech or play intended to produce laughter. "Tragedy" by contrast, comes from the Greek word "tragoidia" and deals with "suffering".

One thing that makes a "comedy" produce laughter is the certainty that no "tragedy" is going to happen. When the coyote plots to catch the road runner you know in advance that it's not going to happen. When Elmer Fudd gets his shotgun and goes hunting for a "wabbit" you can relax with the absolute certainty that nobody is going to die. That's why comedies are funny.

The early church, as you know, faced opposition from both civil and religious authorities. When Peter and John were forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus and threatened with punishment if they did, they returned to their own company and remembered a "comedy" written centuries before in the second Psalm (Acts 4:23 - 30). The Psalmist states that when the kings and rulers of the earth set themselves against the Lord and His Anointed, "**He that sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision**" (Ps. 2:4).

Just think about it! If all the rulers of earth combined their military might, how can they possibly damage or defeat the Sovereign of the Universe? When we thumb our noses because we have sent a man to the moon, our Creator God safely relaxes in the heavens millions of light years away from our most advanced weapons. No wonder He laughs!

Recognizing this truth created great confidence in the early church. Instead of being silenced by Herod, Pilate, and the people of Israel, they refused to be intimidated. In fact, they even prayed for boldness (Acts 4:29). Yes! Many of these brave believers died as martyrs, but in spite of this they could still die with a smile upon their lips.

In 1925 Eugene O'Neill produced a play titled "Lazarus Laughed". The hero of the play, of course, was the friend of Jesus who died at Bethany. He had been dead four days when Jesus called him back to life (John 11:1 - 37). Since Lazarus had already been dead he saw the problems of this life from a different perspective. He knew that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that we shall experience on the other side of death (Rom. 8:18). Consequently, when faced with earthly suffering Lazarus laughed. In fact, according to the play, the more he laughed the younger and stronger he became.

Gene Weece told me this corny joke some 50 years ago about a little league ball game. One little guy was taking a few practice swings with a radiant smile on his face. A stranger asked what the score was. The little guy grinned and said "72 to noth'n". The stranger, seeing such a radiant smile said: "I'll bet you are ahead". The little guy said "no, we are behind". The perplexed stranger then asked, : "Why are you so happy?". The answer was: "We're just coming up to our first bats!"

One of the most famous promises in the Bible is found in Romans 8:28. It reads like this: **“For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”**.

Please note that all things are not good. In the course of your life you will come in contact with much evil and suffering. God, however, is All Powerful and Paul “knew” that He is able to cause even bad things to “work together for good”.

Please also note that this wonderful promise is not for everyone. It is only for those who “love God” and are “the called according to his purpose.”

If you love God and are the called according to his purpose, this promise is for you! No matter what happens you can “know” that life is like a comedy. Since God is working everything together for good, you laugh every day just like Lazarus did!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce