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## **“Get Serious”**

Genesis 21:1-7

September 14, 2003

Peter Hiatt

I keep getting these bulletin bloopers from actual church bulletins. Here's one:

- The sermon this morning: “Jesus Walks on the Water.” The sermon tonight: “Searching for Jesus.”

Here's another one:

- Barbara remains in the hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.
- The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The Congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- Mrs. Johnson will be entering the hospital this week for testes.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
- Our next song is “Angels We Have Heard Get High.”
- This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

Now, I need to ask you a painful question: Why did you laugh? You *did laugh*. Don't you take Easter seriously? Do angels really get high? Is low self-esteem, sickness, tragedy, and sin funny? Don't you take them seriously? Don't you take *God* seriously? — for God is not mocked.

One more:

- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

That reminds me of something I saw several years ago during a service of worship in Toronto, Canada. There were a few thousand of us in a hotel ballroom singing hymns and praise songs. I was watching a group of very well dressed and dignified, middle-aged, church ladies a few rows in front of me.

As we worshipped, one of them began to laugh, and then another began to laugh And then one of them laughed so hard, that for a moment she lost control and . . . made a little music. That made the others laugh even harder! Then it happened to another and then another . . . until about eight of these middle-aged, well dressed, very religious-looking, church ladies were rolling around on the floor in uncontrollable laughter, tears, and . . . stuff. And the people around them just kept right on worshipping. I think it may be the strangest thing I've ever seen in church . . . outside of

junior high youth group. The people at the conference called it holy laughter and said it was part of revival, what they called the Toronto Blessing.

You may remember that here in the States there were several pastors and authors who denounced this holy laughter as ungodly.

- They argued that there is a difference between respectable joy and hilarious laughter.
- They argued that this laughter is undignified and offensive.
- They argued that laughter belittles and mocks that which is laughed at.
- They said that “God should be taken seriously.”

Long ago, God said to Abram that He would make of him a great nation, and through him all the families of earth would be blessed. Ten years later, at eighty-five years old, he had no children and tried to engineer the blessing with Hagar (the maid) and Ishmael.

In Genesis 17:15, when Abraham is ninety-nine years old, God appears to him and says:

*“As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her; I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!” God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”*

God reveals that Sarah will give birth to the Promised One, and Abraham falls on his face and laughs. Doesn't Abraham take God seriously?

Genesis 18:10:

*The LORD said, “I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son.” But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”*

Sarah laughs, and God asks, “Why did you laugh?” Maybe God is pointing out that Sarah and possibly Abraham don't take Him seriously. If they don't take God seriously, it's because they take themselves entirely *too* seriously . . . their experience too seriously, their old bodies too

seriously. They may actually think some things are “too hard for the Lord.” If so, they lack faith and mock God.

If you come to the Lord’s table and laugh, because you take yourself so seriously that you don’t take God seriously . . . that is, if you come to the Lord’s table and think there is *no way* God would ever die for you, love you, forgive you, save you, I warn you: God is not mocked. And you drink judgment on yourself. Your laughter is cynicism, and this world is full of it. In truth, it’s not funny but a lie. Taking yourself more seriously than God is blasphemy.

So with God I ask you, “Why do you laugh?”

Genesis 21:1:

*The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac.*

Now, I neglected to tell you, Isaac (“Yitschaq” in Hebrew) means “he laughs” or “one laughs,” from the word “tsachaq” meaning laughter. So then, the child of the promise—the promised seed—the child of the covenant is literally named “laughs.”

*And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; every one who hears will laugh over me.” And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would suckle children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”*

That is funny. But who’s responsible for this laughter? Sarah says, “God has made laughter for me.” And how has God made laughter? Through the child born, the son given. So what are they laughing at? Not God so much as themselves. Sarah says, “Every one who hears will laugh over me.” Who will laugh? Everyone that hears of the promised child. That’s a lot of folks . . . including God.

Do Abraham and Sarah have faith? Well, yes. Abraham is the “father of faith,” and Sarah is laughing in faith. Even though they had not yet possessed all the promised land, they had received the promised one. So now they laugh in faith. That is, they take God so incredibly seriously that they no longer take themselves and their experiences seriously at all.

After twenty-five years of striving, failure, and sadness  
 trying to engineer the blessing . . .  
 After twenty-five years of being humbled . . .  
 After twenty-five years of dying to themselves . . .

. . . they receive the gift of God, the promised one, by grace. And then they all laugh. They tsachaq over Yitschaq, born through old Sarah.

Karl Barth, the twentieth century's most respected theologian, taught in regard to these verses that "laughter is man's humble reaction to the amazing and ridiculous fact of man being a recipient of God's honor."

I suspect that those church ladies rolling on the floor in Toronto laughed like Sarah laughed. They laughed because the Promised One was with them. And the more they took *Him* seriously, the less they took *themselves* seriously. They saw the Christ child and laughed at His manger: themselves. Whether it feels supernatural or not, laughter like that comes from God.

In Toronto, I had two supernatural encounters.

1. In the first, I was entirely humbled by truth.
2. In the second, the Truth (Jesus) showed me that He was in me, through me, all around me, and always with me. And I've never felt such joy. I took God seriously and myself (my flesh) not seriously at all.

You realize you can't serve two masters, so either you will take God seriously and laugh at everything else, including yourself, or you'll take yourself seriously and laugh at everything else, including God.

And, of course, that was the Pharisees' problems. They took themselves so seriously that when the Promised Child arrived, when God incarnate stood in their midst, they laughed at Him, for they would not laugh at themselves.

Do you laugh much at yourself?  
Do you take a joke well?  
Are you easily embarrassed?  
Are you easily offended?

If so, maybe there is too much of you to offend.

I recently read, "Truth is a constant delight to them that love her; such beauty holds no power to offend." Jesus said, "I am the truth," and "Blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

According to Will Willimon at Duke University, sometime in the sixth century A.D., a Palestinian monk, St. Simeon of Salos, was kicked out of church on more than one occasion for throwing nuts at the altar candles. His last visit to church was on a Good Friday. As the priest admonished the faithful to "mortify the flesh in honor of Christ" (that is, take ego lightly and Christ seriously), St. Simeon pulled out a long sausage and started eating it. While they were dragging him out, he said, "The essence of human sinfulness is to take ourselves and our own rituals too seriously."

Faith is taking God seriously. And if I take God seriously enough, I don't take myself seriously at all. In fact, I've lost myself altogether. Sin is taking myself seriously. I sin because I take my own fear and anxiety and shame so seriously. I sin because I take my dreams, desires, appetites,

and longings so seriously, and my ability to obtain them so seriously, that I won't surrender them to God. I sin because I take *my goodness* seriously and God's goodness not seriously at all.

Do you know why we don't laugh more and live more? Do you know why we don't rejoice more and give more? Do you know why we don't preach Gospel more and love more? We think:

“Who am I to talk about Jesus?”

“Who am I to preach good news?”

“Who am I to live with such joy?”

“That's like asking a shriveled up, ninety-year-old woman to have a baby!”

When I read those church bulletin bloopers, you *should* have laughed . . . *more!* Not at God, but at where He's born: the Church. Not because you don't take Him seriously, but because you *do* take Him seriously and believe His Word through the angels.

“Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

The manger is the Church, old Sarah, and us. The gift of God is born in us. Believe the angels and laugh!

G. K. Chesterton wrote:

Angels can fly because they can take themselves lightly. This has been always the instinct of Christendom, and especially the instinct of Christian art. . . . Every figure seems ready to fly up and float about in the heavens. The tattered cloak of the beggar will bear him up like the rayed plumes of the angels. But the kings in their heavy gold and the proud in their robes of purple will all of their nature sink downwards, for pride cannot rise to levity or levitation. Pride is the downward drag of all things into an easy solemnity. . . . solemnity flows out of men naturally; but laughter is a leap. It is easy to be heavy: hard to be light. Satan fell by the force of gravity.

Satan takes himself very, very seriously. He is perpetually offended, and he cannot in the least bit take a joke or laugh at himself.

In 1964, I saw my very first motion picture. I sat through it twice because of its profound, spiritual impact. This particular scene gave me one of my favorite pictures of the kingdom of God. In it, Mary Poppins, Burt, Jane, and Michael rush to Uncle Albert's house because he's stuck on the ceiling. When he laughs, he floats. He can't stop laughing, so Burt and the children laugh to the ceiling with him. Mary Poppins provides the meal, and they all commune, sharing a meal together floating at the ceiling.

“Satan fell by force of gravity.” They rise with laughter . . .

[Movie clip—Mary Poppins]:

Uncle Albert: I'm having such a good time. I wish that you all could stay up here all the time.

Michael: It looks like we'll have to. There's no way to get down.

Uncle Albert: Well, there is a way. Frankly, I don't like to mention it, because you have to think of something sad.

Mary Poppins: Then do get on with it, please.

Uncle Albert: Let's see . . . I've got the very thing. Yesterday when the lady next door answered the bell, there was a man there. And the man said to the lady, "I'm terribly sorry; I just ran over your cat."

Michael: Oh, that's sad.

Jane: The poor cat!

[Everyone begins to sink.]

Uncle Albert: And then the man said, "I'd like to replace your cat." And the lady said, "That's alright with me, but how are you at catching mice?"

[Laughter — Everyone floats up toward the ceiling again.]

Uncle Albert: Well, I try, really I do, but everything ends up so hilarious!

So Uncle Albert says, "Everything ends up so hilarious."

Maybe you think . . .

"Yeah, right. I live in a real world, not a fairytale. In a joke about a dead cat, the sad may turn to glad, but I live in a world of dead people and dying people — a world of real sadness, tragedy, and pain."

You know, in a comedy or a joke, there is often real sadness, tragedy, and pain. But something happens, and the something that happens changes all the meanings. It's at that point that you laugh — when you *get* it, when you get the new meaning, at the punch line.

So I see what you're saying:

"What could be powerful enough to turn all sorrow into joy, to turn all "mourning into dancing," to "make all things new"? Because I don't live in a Disney movie. I live in *this* world of real sadness, tragedy, and pain. I live in a world where people wander in the wilderness, where children are sold into slavery, where women are raped and evil rages with extreme fury. I live in a world where the only good man that ever lived was stripped, beaten, and nailed naked to a Roman cross as the religious leaders mocked Him with glee and Satan himself thrilled at the death of the Promised One, seed of Abraham, Son of God. I live in a world where Goodness Himself was crucified by evil!"

- Perhaps you haven't gotten the meaning . . .
- Perhaps you don't believe the punch line . . .
- Perhaps *none* of us believe the punch line, or we'd float away, or at least "rejoice always," "making melody to the Lord with all our heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of Jesus"—the Meaning—the Logos.

John wrote, “In the beginning was the Meaning, and the Meaning was with God, and the Meaning was God. . . . all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Meaning became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.”

Remember that Isaac is a picture of Jesus (the only begotten Son). God said, “I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.” His descendants are Israel. And Paul tells us we *are* Israel, the true children of Abraham (Romans 9), and he reminds us that through Isaac “shall the descendants be named.” We are named through Isaac (Jesus) — children of laughter.

It’s Isaac that makes all who hear, laugh. In the end, everyone will hear, so everyone will laugh at what God has done through Christ Jesus the Son. Isaac is a picture of Jesus.

Toward the end of his life, Abraham is commanded by God to sacrifice Isaac on Mt. Moriah. At the last minute, an angel stops his hand, and Isaac is spared.

Two thousand years ago, God the Father gave His Son to be sacrificed on Mt. Calvary next to Mt. Moriah. No angel could stop God’s hand. On that cross, Jesus bore all the sadness, tragedy, pain, and shame of a fallen world in such a way that what Satan thought was his greatest victory on Friday was revealed his ultimate and forever defeat on Easter Sunday. For Christ rose from the dead giving new meaning to all creation.

He says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

And God “reconciles to Himself all things, making peace by the blood of that cross.”

Now “all things work for good with those that love God and are called according to His purpose.”

And just think! *Satan* threw the switch that shown the light. The greatest act of evil forever displays the goodness of God and transforms every sorrow, sin, and shame into ecstasy forever and ever, amen. That, my friends, is Orthodox Christian Theology. That is what we say we believe. And if we took it seriously, we’d laugh more.

You see, Easter really is hilarious. It’s the punch line for all creation. It’s like Uncle Albert says, “Everything seems to end up so hilarious.” In Greek Orthodox tradition, the day after Easter was devoted to telling jokes . . . because Easter is the ultimate joke upon the prince of darkness grim. Easter is the point at which we get the meaning. But you can’t get to Easter Sunday without traveling through Friday.

So it’s not like we won’t suffer, and it’s not like we don’t know grief, sin, and shame; Jesus bears our suffering, grief, sin, and shame, and so it’s His, but we must taste it. And we do taste it. Perhaps we taste it so we can get the punch line, get the meaning, see the “glory of God shining in the face of Christ.” Perhaps we suffer with Him for a short time that we may laugh with Him

forever. For “all our mourning does turn into dancing.” Perhaps all our tears turn into laughter. So without any tears, we miss all the laughter.

At the start of His ministry, Jesus said, “Blessed are you that weep now, for you will laugh. But woe to you that laugh now, for you will weep.” “Woe,” because they must have been laughing without meaning, without Jesus. They didn’t see Him, so they couldn’t get Him—the Meaning.

But now we’ve got Him by grace through faith. We don’t yet live in the promised land, but unto us and in us the promised child is born. So we laugh even now through tears in the land of our exile. We laugh by faith.

At the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, on the night He was betrayed, as He sat at the Passover feast with His disciples, He said, “In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

There are people who avoid tribulation in order to be of good cheer. But Christ calls us to suffer tribulation with *His* good cheer. The Church is called to throw parties at the gates of Hell. And that’s what Jesus did that night. Before His cross they had a feast: the Passover Feast. It was the Jews’ greatest feast, when they were commanded to celebrate deliverance even in the land of their exile.

Jesus said, “In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer . . .” Chesterton wrote, “Moderate strength is shown in violence, supreme strength is shown in levity.” We are to show supreme strength. Where do we get that strength? The Jews feasted on lamb. Jesus *is* the Lamb. They laughed because of the promise, the covenant. Jesus *is* the promise and covenant.

So as they sat at table that night, Jesus took the bread and broke it saying, “This is my body which is given for you.” He took the cup, and having given thanks He gave it to them saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin.”

There were four cups of wine at a traditional Passover. Scholars think this cup Jesus referred to was the third cup, which was called the cup of redemption. The fourth was called the cup of consummation. Jesus then said, “I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it new with you in my father’s kingdom.”

At this table, we remember our Lord’s suffering. But we also anticipate the Great Banquet.

At this table, we remember the price He paid, but we also get the punch line—the meaning of all things.

At this table, we lose ourselves, but we find ourselves.

Do you see it? Jesus has taken us so seriously that we don’t *have* to. So at this table, Bride of Christ, you can surrender self; abandon yourself to joy and commune with Jesus.

The last place the Hebrew word *tsachaq* is used in Isaac's story is when Yitschaq gives *tsachaq* to his bride Rebecca. *Tsachaq* is translated variously in this text, but it means Isaac put the moves on Rebecca, and she wasn't offended. She laughed with joy.

We seem to think that this table is terribly solemn . . . and it is. But sometimes we need to take it more seriously than that. At times, commune in sorrow—be acquainted with sorrow. But you are always to feast in faith: good cheer.

Joy is the serious business of Heaven.

I think we're pretty good at communing in sorrow, but I don't know that we're that good at communing in joy. So may you have a new picture now.

In *Mary Poppins*, they float to the ceiling on laughter and share a meal with Uncle Albert. At communion, we float into the heavens and feast with God . . . or maybe Heaven—the New Jerusalem—comes down, and we party at the gates of Hell. Whatever the case, stop taking your *self* so seriously and *get serious* about this: the love of God poured out.

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If you've been to His table, may you die to yourself and forget yourself and live to Him. He has taken you so seriously that He gives you His body and His blood to eat and drink. You don't need to take yourself seriously any more. You can live!

Isaiah 25:6-9:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined. And he will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

In Jesus' name, amen.

### Further Reading

And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her; I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in thy sight!” God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. . . . And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. . . . The LORD said, “I will surely return to you in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, in the spring, and Sarah shall have a son.” But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “No, but you did laugh.”

Genesis 17:15-19, 18:1, 18:10-15

But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his descendants; but “Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants. For this is what the promise said, “About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son.”

Romans 9:6-9

For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, “Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married.” Now we, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Galatians 4:22-28

The New Testament uses different words—salvation, redemption, reconciliation, resurrection, glory—to describe different aspects of God’s work in Christ, but they all point to the Great Eucatastrophe, the victorious eruption of God’s holiness in a world of sin. They ask us to listen to what Dante heard at the end of his long ascent from hell to heaven: a sound like laughter of the universe. It is the laughter of holiness, as lamentation breaks into jubilation, as despair gives way to hope, as a world long frozen in sin cracks open to Life.

What can we do but join the laughter? To laugh is to surrender, to capitulate to a surprising incongruity. . . . Laughter is a happy release of the tensions created by an unexpected turn of events.

And the grandest surprise of all, the greatest reversal ever, has happened by God's grace in Jesus Christ. Who could have guessed it? What can we do but surrender to it? Our response is like laughter, but we should now use the biblical word for it: faith.

Donald McCullough, The Trivialization of God

Humor is a proof of faith.

Charles M. Schulz

If we are sure of our God we are free to laugh at ourselves . . . . The saints (and artists) are those who not only accept, but rejoice in the incongruity and so learn that laughter is holy. The infinite disparity between God's love and man's deserts is an indubitable fact; the saint embraces it for joy.

Madeleine L'Engle

The man who makes faces to amuse a baby gives up his dignity; so does the man who roars with laughter. The essential condition for having fun is to forget your dignity, that is, to forget yourself. We recognize this truth, for example, when we say, "I was beside myself with laughter." We have to get outside ourselves to enjoy ourselves. Otherwise, we won't have any perspective; we won't see the joke.

William Kilpatrick, Psychological Seduction

A characteristic of the great saints is their power of levity. Angels can fly because they can take themselves lightly. This has been always the instinct of Christendom, and especially the instinct of Christian art. . . . Every figure seems ready to fly up and float about in the heavens. The tattered cloak of the beggar will bear him up like the rayed plumes of the angels. But the kings in their heavy gold and the proud in their robes of purple will all of their nature sink downwards, for pride cannot rise to levity or levitation. Pride is the downward drag of all things into an easy solemnity. One "settles down" into a sort of selfish seriousness; but one has to rise to a gay self-forgetfulness. A man "falls" into a brown study; he reaches up at a blue sky. Seriousness is not a virtue. It would be a heresy, but a much more sensible heresy, to say that seriousness is a vice. It is really a natural trend or lapse into taking one's self gravely, because it is the easiest thing to do. It is much easier to write a Good Times leading article than a good joke in Punch. For solemnity flows out of men naturally; but laughter is a leap. It is easy to be heavy: hard to be light. Satan fell by the force of gravity.

G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

Humor involves a sense of proportion and a power of seeing yourself from the outside. Whatever else we attribute to beings who sinned through pride, we must not attribute this. Satan, said Chesterton, fell through force of gravity. We must picture Hell as a state where everyone is perpetually concerned about his own dignity and advancement, where everyone has a grievance, and where everyone lives the deadly serious passions of envy, self-importance, and resentment.

C. S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters

And if our Enemy wins anything from us by our falling (for that is what pleases him), he loses many times more from our rising through love and humility. And this glorious rising causes him such great sorrow and pain, from his hatred for our souls, that he is continually burning with

resentment. And all this sorrow which he wants to cause us will be turned against him. And this is what made our Lord despise him, and this made me laugh heartily.

Julian of Norwich

It pleases him [Jesus] that we should laugh to cheer ourselves, and rejoice in God because the Fiend has been conquered. And after this I became serious, and said, "I can see three things: delight, scorn and seriousness. I see delight that the Fiend is defeated; I see scorn because God scorns him and he is to be scorned; and I see seriousness because he is defeated by the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and by his death, which took place in all seriousness and with weary hardship."

Julian of Norwich

Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."

Psalms 2:1-6

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