

Series: Hilarious Faith

Lesson 1: “Hilarious Faith is Rich in Every Way”

*Announcements, encouragement to invite people and opening prayer.



Connect: an opportunity for people to immediately interact and connect with each other; icebreaker/attention getters. **Icebreaker:** What would you think I meant if I looked at you and said, “You are hilarious?”

Transition: We have entered the Easter season. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the **joy** set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” That is a hard saying. How could someone fix their eyes on the object of their undeserved execution, knowing they were innocent, but taking the death penalty for someone else? Jesus considered the opportunity to be a joy God had set before Him. It was filled with shame because the Scripture taught that a man who is hung on a cross is cursed by God (Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:23). However, Jesus took our punishment so we could be set free. That victory against Satan and knowing that God would raise Him to life and set Him at His right hand in heaven to rule forever gave Jesus the wisdom to know His sacrifice brought victory and life to all who follow Him through life all the way to heaven. His eyes are set on the reality of His faith victory. They are set on the end of the story.

Bottom Line: Jesus was hilarious in His faith in God’s plan to redeem us. He laughed at the shame of the cross. It was His joy to give sacrificially because of what it would bring about, the joy of our final home.

LESSON PLAN

Question: How can you look at faith in such a way that you have hilarious faith like Jesus no matter what the cost?

Background: Paul has told the Corinthian Christians about the hilarious faith of the Macedonian churches, the churches in the region of Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. They were incredibly poor and yet their poverty was filled with an abundance of joy as they collected offerings beyond what was expected. It was exciting to them to push the limits of their giving for the kingdom work of God to advance. They loved this opportunity! They realized that it is a gift from God, an act of grace to be able to give sacrificially to meet needs. They knew that contributing to the needs of others is made possible only because of God’s undeserved gifts in their lives. This was just too fun in their eyes! That is hilarious faith and it is given totally from the heart!



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God loves it when people reach this excitement level in their faith, where being part of the church is just fun. Paul then goes on to tell the Corinthian Christians that just as they excel in everything, in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness, in their love for the Apostles' work, make sure they also excel in this grace of giving to the work of the kingdom, the mission of God on earth. They are to be hilarious in every area of their faith. He said it was not a command, but it was a great test of the depth and sincerity of their faith, their belief in being the church, the body of Christ called to action. He then gives the example that Jesus was rich beyond anyone ever. He owns all creation, even the heavens and yet He chose to become poor so that we might become rich as the body of Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:1-5 (Achaia – uh- kye'-uh)

1. The ministry of the Apostles involved making needs known among the churches so those doing well could help those who were struggling. They would take the collections and distribute them wisely to remove needs among the churches. What does Paul call their giving to the missionary ministry of the Apostles?

Question: What are some ways we still carry out this service to the saints?

Question: How does our hilarious giving and serving for the sake of others show a true image of the eyes of our Lord Jesus?

2. Paul wants their gift to be generous and not given grudgingly. What does Paul mean by that statement?

Grudgingly = Greek: plā ah nex' e ah) Made up of the words MORE and TO HAVE. It meant greed and covetousness. It was often used to describe a thief.

Question: How could not following through on a pledge made to God with your giving to the church, or to missionaries, or even a commitment to serve for God, be seen by God as greed and covetousness?

God tells us not to make an oath, to make a pledge and then break it. Our word should be kept pure as God's people. To withhold time and money and talents that we promised to give for the



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Kingdom is greed. I am taking it away from God and those He wants to minister to for my own gain. It shows my heart is more concerned with my needs and wants. That would mean I do not have the eyes of Jesus who never back-pedaled on His promise to us.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

3. What does God give through Paul as the principle for sowing and reaping?

Question: Have you ever thought about the seed you plant with you time, your talents and your finances? Would your seed bring about a great harvest for God or poor harvest?

4. How does God expect us to determine how much we give?

Question: How do we decide in our heart the amount we contribute to God's work in the church?

5. Do you think the same principle would apply to the giving of our talents as well?

The early Christians grew rapidly because they were daily interacting with people and sharing their life of faith. They were bold in their witness for Christ, never hiding it no matter what the cost and God added to their number daily because they gave their words and their lives generously.)

6. God loves a cheerful giver, someone who gives from the heart. The Greek word for cheerful meant hilarious. God loves a hilarious giver who heart is filled with joy at the opportunity to share in God's work. He then blesses us with all we need. What will we abound in because of God's grace and blessing for our hilarious faith?



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7. Why are we made rich in every way by God?

Question: What are some of the areas in the world that still need people with hilarious faith to rise up and help make the gospel spread?

According to research by the Joshua Project:

- Total People Groups: 16,596
- Unreached People Groups: 6,870 %
- People Groups Unreached: 41.4%
- World Population: 6.75Billion
- Population in Unreached Groups: 2.80Billion
- % Population in Unreached: 41.5%

8. God will be praise because of their obedience that accompanies their confession of the gospel of Christ. Explain what Paul means by that statement.

Question: How can we help every Christian in the church understand the reality of this statement by Paul that obedient serving accompanies sincere faith?

9. How does Paul describe this gift of hilarious faith that God has given us the opportunity to share in?

Question: How is your faith indescribable?

Breakout Group or Discussion Time: We cannot help others unless we have our own house, our own heart in order. Consider these three questions privately. After a short time, discuss the power of God’s witness in our church if we all would increase in each of these areas of hilarious faith.



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1. What percentage of your income are you giving to God?
2. What percentage of your talents are you giving to God?
3. What percentage of your time are you giving to God?

Final Question: What is the one idea that stands out to you most from this lesson?