

"Entertainment Is Always Good"

Luke 23:4-9

April 13, 2011

Lent 6

Our world today emphasizes ENTERTAINMENT - pleasure, fun. We have more opportunities for fun and more choices for fun than ever before. We have the usual entertainment – TV, movies, DVDS, sports, and so on. New technology gives us new fun: computers, the internet video games, and so on. We desire more and more entertainment. Why? Because entertainment is good. We think, "If something is fun, it is good," and we are attracted to it. However, if something is not fun, it is bad and we avoid that" We demand that everything be entertaining. Students want school to be fun. People want their jobs to be enjoyable. We want God and church to be fun, too. Is that true? Does God exist to entertain us?

The Jewish King Herod in our text wanted that. Herod was a fun seeker. He gave many big parties. At one birthday party for himself, his own step daughter danced to excite the men there. Herod certainly enjoyed his entertainment. So, when Pontius Pilate sent Jesus to King Herod, he expected more entertainment. Herod had heard about Jesus' power - healing sick people, making dead people alive, feeding five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish, and stilling a storm. Herod wanted to see some magic, some tricks. He wasn't really interested in Jesus himself and learning His message. He wanted some fun. And, when Herod came to Jesus, asking for magic and expecting fun and entertainment, Jesus did not answer him. Herod got no fun and enjoyment. No entertainment meant Jesus was no good. So Herod rejected Jesus and sent him BACK to Pilate.

Many people today are the same. People come to Christ and are not really interested in Him and His message, but are seeking only fun and entertainment. Try inviting non-Christians to church. If you invite them to worship on Sunday, they often come up with excuses: "Church is boring and Sunday is my only day to have fun." However, if you invite people to come to a church party or fund raising dinner, people will say, "Fine. I will be happy to come." People think if something is fun and

entertaining, it is good and they will come. If something is boring and not fun, they think it is bad and they will not come.

Even Christians - church members - do the same -- seek after pleasure. People will say church is boring and, if it goes past an hour, it's no fun. Yet to go and sit outside for three hours and watch the Montana Griz play football in freezing weather and snow is fun and many people willingly do that. Some Christians say they can't read the Bible because it is not enjoyable. Yet these same people will read the tabloids (strange newspapers) you buy in the supermarket that tell us about the latest news about people from the moon landing on earth. When we collect our offerings for the Lord, students will complain and say, "I'm broke; no money." Adults say, "I can't afford much." Yet students will find money to buy all the new technology – new phones, iPads, and so on because that is fun. Adults will willingly pay huge sums of money to buy a new trailer or mobile home or go on an expensive vacations because that's fun.

Some pleasure is sinful. Premarital sex, getting drunk, becoming high all feel good, but they are sinful. However, all fun and entertainment are not necessarily bad or sinful. They become a problem when we expect all good things to be fun and entertaining. Or, we expect all fun and entertaining things are automatically good. That is a lie from Satan. All fun and entertaining things are not always good. Some fun and pleasure leads us away from God. And all good things are not always fun and entertaining. God Himself is not always fun and entertaining.

When we gather together here during Lent, where do we find God? We see Him hanging on a cross, bleeding and dying. Is that entertainment? No. Jesus suffered much on the cross. Soldiers had savagely beaten him several times. Six inch nails were driven through his hands and feet. Breathing was difficult. Jesus lost much fluids - bleeding and sweating. Jesus suffered a slow and painful death. Was that fun? Not for Jesus.

And it is not fun or entertaining for us meditating upon it now because of the reason for the crucifixion. Jesus was an innocent man. Jesus had broken no laws. The Jewish authorities had

trumped up charges against Him. In fact, Jesus had never sinned. So, why did He suffer this un-fun, unenjoyable experience? It was because of your sin and my sin. It is your rude and disrespectful behavior that is the reason for Jesus to be nailed to that tree. It is your unkind words and your actions that do not show love that caused Jesus to suffer on the cross. It is your wrong thoughts, wrong words, and wrong actions and your failure to do good, kind, and loving things that caused Jesus to die. When you consider that it is your law breaking and sin that caused Jesus to be crucified, is that entertainment? Is that fun? Of course not.

And, when Jesus calls us to believe in Him and follow Him, is that fun? Many people think it should be. People think, If you just trust in Jesus and follow Him, then you will be successful and happy. Life will be entertaining and always enjoyable. Yet Jesus tells us that we must be willing to take up our cross (which means "accept troubles"), deny (forget) our wants and desires, and follow Him. People will reject us just like they rejected Jesus. We will suffer just like Jesus suffered. Is that entertaining? No, it is not.

His suffering was not any fun. Our sin is not entertaining. Following Jesus is neither fun or entertaining. Therefore, many people are like King Herod, rejecting Jesus and refusing to follow Him because it is not fun, not entertaining. Then, why do we believe in Jesus? Why do we follow Jesus? Because God gives us an even better pleasure than this world offers.

When people seek for pleasure and fun in this world, what happens? We try one thing and it is pleasurable and fun - for awhile. Then we become bored and look for some other pleasure. We are often not satisfied. We are looking for more entertainment and different fun. Even if we find entertainment and pleasure, our pleasure and fun do not last. They are only temporary. The Bible says, that God will destroy all of this world on the Last Day. All of the fun and entertainment - all the TVs, computers, video games, sports, cell phones and iPads - will burn in fire. All of this temporary fun and changing entertainment - why dwell upon those things?

God offers us pleasure that will last -- forever. He loves us despite our sins. He forgives our sins because Jesus suffered the agony of the cross and died. We don't have to endure the guilt. He has promised to be with us always. We are never alone and lonely. He connects Himself to us in our baptism. He speaks to us through His Word. He comes to us in His body and blood in Holy Communion. We have His love, forgiveness, support and presence always. That is pure pleasure.

And God gives us a home in heaven with Him. He offered it because of His love. He gave it by His Son dying on the cross and forgiving our sins. He guaranteed it by making Jesus alive again from the dead to show that we, too, will rise from the dead and live forever. In heaven, there is perfect pleasure, perfect peace, and perfect joy. We will never be disappointed, never sad, and never bored. We will be free from the problems and cares of this world which is the reason we seek fun and pleasure here. That pleasure and joy will never end, never be gone, but that pleasure will continue forever and ever.

You don't have to seek that pleasure. You don't have to earn that pleasure or buy that pleasure. God gives it to you freely. Trusting in Jesus Christ, you have forgiveness for your sins. You are holy and perfect in God's eyes. Trusting in Jesus Christ, you already have heaven. You don't have to go seeking entertainment. You already have pleasure that will never end.

I encourage you to reject Satan's lies. Entertainment is always good -- that's a lie. Sometimes entertainment is bad. Sometimes entertainment becomes bad by leading us away from God. Good things are always entertaining -- that's a lie. Some good things cause suffering and pain. Jesus work to save us was good but it caused pain and suffering. Believing in Jesus and following Him is not always fun and exciting. It can cause problems and suffering. But remember this one truth: God's work in Jesus Christ is always good and ultimately gives us pleasure. We have God's love. We have God's forgiveness. We have the pleasures of heaven. If you are seeking "entertainment", set your heart on that! Amen.