



PRAYER REQUESTS

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 16

APRIL 15, 2012

- Continue to keep **Pam Richards'** parents in your prayers.
- **Reagan Kenyon, Sasha Tompkins & La Donna Gammill** all need your prayers as they continue to seek great results.
- Beverly and Clifford Gunn, Judy Roybal, JO Vick, Dick and Judy Bird, Belle Yokum, Willie Johnson, Bobbye Wright, Larry Reeder, Koben Puckett, are all in need of prayers.

Announcements

- Tomorrow will be our quarterly **Ladies' Night Out** at the Church on the Hill at 6:30 PM. Joy Garner will be the guest speaker. Let's all get together and join in this community gathering of women who love and honor Jesus as their Lord.
- The Baptist Church is having a fundraiser hamburger luncheon today after morning services to raise money to send students to summer Bible camp. Take this opportunity to avoid cooking lunch and help send children to summer camp :-)
- Keep the families of **Field Irwin** and **Cecil West** in your prayers since adjusting to the loss of these deeply loved men will be hard for them.

- On **Wednesday** evening we will meet at **6 PM** to have a meal together. There is a sign up list on the back table. After we eat, we will write notes of encouragement as part of our monthly Working for the Master program.

Benevolence Update

We are collecting **cake mix & frosting** for the Portales Christian Children's Home this month. Our goal is to make sure we have a birthday cake for every child at the home, so we know you can do that!!



Silas Shotwell will bring the lesson today

Men Serving this Month

- **Announcements:** Les Miller
- **Scripture:** Les Miller
- **Song Service:** Mark McCollum

Happy Birthday

April 14— Hannah Thomas

April 18— Beverly Carter

Anniversaries—

April 16— Gary & Rhetta Good

Calendar of Events

April 16— Ladies' Night Out at Church on the Hill, 6:30 PM

April 18— Working for the Master

May 6— Potluck Sunday

May 16— Working for the Master

May 20— Baccalaureate, 6 PM

May 25— Graduation, 7 PM

Laughing Jesus by Russ Lawson

Have you ever pictured Jesus laughing? Now, I know that you have pictured him in your mind's eye preaching, praying, rebuking sinners -- even suffering and dying, but what about him laughing? If you are like most folks, probably you haven't. Some folks are downright against humor in religion. I have a preacher friend named John. He was preaching in a church in Texas a few years ago. On one occasion, an older lady stopped him and told him, "If you tell one more joke or humorous story from the pulpit, I'm going to get up and leave, religion is serious business." John said, true to her word, she did just that in the middle of one of his lessons. Obviously, she had never thought about a Jesus who laughed.

I look for clean religious humor whenever I can. I enjoy laughing and it helps keep my spirits up in a sometimes very troubled world. Just last week I ran across a group called "The fellowship of Merry Christians" that produces books, cards, and pictures, as well as a monthly newsletter of religious humor and cartoons. One of the things I found on their website is a picture of a laughing Jesus, titled, "Risen Christ by the Sea." There before my eyes was a picture of Jesus laughing, and it hit me, I don't think I ever pictured him that way before.

Yes, I've heard people speak about the cultural humor in some of his parables, but I had just never imagined him laughing out loud because something struck him as being funny. Yet, isn't that one of the most basic things that makes up our humanity?

I've mentioned before that I like a good science fiction movie and I noticed something interesting through the years. In a couple of the movies, the writers decided that a machine or computer could be considered to be a living self-aware being if it could understand and laugh at something humorous to humans. Granted, that is taking liberties just because they are the script writers, but it points out that it is considered important to many people. In fact, our sense of humor is part of what defines who we are. It's hard to be likable, warm or accepting if you can't laugh at the world around you as well as yourself.

I believe that Jesus knew how to laugh and did so! I also believe that he fully expects us to do so also. Notice a couple of Old Testament scriptures with me that emphasize this point.

This one, about God, is often repeated as he looks at the rebellious hearts of the nations trying to oppose him with their meager power! "But the one who rules in heaven laughs" ([Psalm 2:4 NLT](#)).

And this one is just about a good philosophy of life. "A cheerful heart is a good medicine" ([Proverbs 17:22](#)).

Then there is the naming of Isaac -- the name Isaac means "laughter" -- since both Abraham and Sarah both laughed at having a child in their old age ([Genesis 21:6](#)).

Laughter is a key response to God's deliverance for his people in any age. We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, "What amazing things the LORD has done for them!" ([Psalm 126:2](#)).

Laughter is even a key part of the description of the worthy woman! She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs with no fear of the future ([Proverbs 31:25](#)).

Jesus wanted others to share in his loving and laughing heart. Notice some of what he said about this: "I have told you this so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" ([John 15:11](#)). "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have many troubling times; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." ([John 16:33](#)).

How happy are you? I hope you try to emulate Jesus not just in sober piety, but also in his ability to laugh -- and laughing should also be seen as a pious act when done appropriately. Someone wrote these words: "I asked God to give me happiness. God said, NO, I give you blessings; happiness is up to you." But God does give us plenty of reasons to rejoice and many examples of laughing. So, don't turn off the humor, God wants to meet you in laughter as well as grief, in joy as well as sorrow, and rejoicing as well as mourning!

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Check out our web site for electronic versions of the newsletter and other resources to support your walk with Jesus—

<http://fortsumnerchurchofchrist.com>