

Loving Our Neighbors Listening to the Apostle of Love

"I just realized my only job is to keep a straight face. And it was impossible. Because no matter what you said to him, no matter what line you gave to him, he took it in, processed it, and then it flew out of his mouth, never the same way twice. And it was incredibly funny every time."

"he has been battling depression of late..."

"If you're that depressed, reach out to someone. And remember: Suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems."

Show business history is filled with stories of comic kings who fought against depression and substance abuse, not always successfully. Jonathan Winters, Williams' hero, was institutionalized for a time. The effortless Dick Van Dyke once said he was "mostly drunk for 15 years." John Belushi and Chris Farley died of overdoses. Mitch Hedberg, Freddie Prinze, Richard Jeni -- all funny men, all gone before their time.

3 elements of a faith that stands the test of time

I. Christianity is Reliable

A. Because Jesus Christ was "from the beginning"

Genesis 1:1 - *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Colossians 1:16 - *For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.*

John 1:3 - *All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*

John 1:1 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...."*

1 John 1:1-2 - *...what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life-- and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--*

B. John the writer was an eyewitness.

Proverbs 9:13-18 - *The woman of folly is boisterous, she is naive and knows nothing. She sits at the doorway of her house, on a seat by the high places of the city, calling to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight: "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here," and to him who lacks understanding she says, "Stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.*

II. Christianity is Personal

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus brings three parties together.

B. Requiring the incarnation

Philippians 2:7 - *but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

C. Secured by the cross

Romans 5:1 - *Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

D. Opening the door to meaningful relationships with others.

1 John 1:3 - *what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

III. Christianity is Joyful.

verse 4...*And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.*

Warren Wiersbe, "Fellowship is Christ's answer to the loneliness of life, joy is His answer to the emptiness, the hollowness of life."