

**October 20, 2020**  
**Hunkered Down Homilies**  
**“Clowns”**



Friends,

Clown costumes are always popular for Halloween. A fuzzy-headed wig, baggy pants, big shoes and some make-up can transform practically anyone into a one-man or one-woman show!

The thing is, no one takes a clown very seriously. One writer told a parable of a fire breaking out in an old theater just before a performance. One of the actors, whose character required that he be dressed as a clown, runs out onto the stage yelling, “Fire! Fire! Run for your lives!” But everyone in the audience thought it was part of the show. They laughed at the funny-faced actor. The more frantic he became, the more hysterical was the laughter. They all perished in the blazes.

Sometimes sharing the gospel feels like that. The Apostle Paul says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

I was in my third year of seminary – just months away from Mastering Divinity – when Dr. Bill Leonard preached on this text in chapel. Dr. Leonard told of going to the rodeo as a child. The clowns were his favorite part as they tumbled over barrels and made balloon animals. They were a distraction at best, an annoyance at worst, for those who came to see the “real” show.

But Dr. Leonard pointed out that all the antics and shenanigans stopped when one of the cowboys got thrown from a bucking horse or a wild bull. That is when the clowns would become deadly serious, putting themselves between the fallen rider and the charging beast. The clowns – the “foolish” ones – risked their lives to save another.

Nonbelievers may laugh at us as we claim faith in one who died homeless and penniless. They may scoff at our church attendance and moral convictions. But I pray we have a chance to demonstrate sacrificial love to them.

That is no laughing matter.



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