

## Are we having fun yet?

Once, while I was at work in McIver State Park, we had a scheduled picnic for over one thousand five hundred people. It was set up to be in “C”, “D”, and “E” areas of the park. Transportation from the outer areas of the park to the main picnic area was to be by hay wagon. The kids loved it, but it left an unimaginable mess on the parking lots and roadways. Clean up of this trail of scattered hay was needed for an area which encompassed over half the park, and required several persons to operate the equipment necessary to accomplish this. Since these affected areas of the park were needed for other parties to use later in the week, it was paramount that a conscientious and speedy effort was necessary which would bring about positive results. The weather was hot and dry. Our water system was being stretched to its limits and the toilets were in constant use. Cleaning them was next to impossible because of the constant use, and people were ignoring our pleas to service them in the interest of sanitation. This was also causing our water tank level to drop alarmingly, jeopardizing the water supply for our campground in addition to our picnickers. The dunking booth that had been set up, contributed to the problem.

About one hundred feet away from the “C” rest room building; a rock band (Johnny Limbo and the Lugnuts) was blasting away at full volume. Garbage was running over and because of the crowd, accessing the trash cans required creativity and courage to negotiate through the throngs of people with the equipment to even haul the garbage....Now came the complaint....The sewage was ankle deep in the toilet building “C” because the septic tank was backed up due to overuse. Being on the weekend, a septic tank pumper truck was hours away at best, and would still be faced with the same restrictions of crowds once he arrived with his huge pumper truck. I then asked my coworker, “Are we having fun yet?”

In yet another time, a co-worker and I were on regularly scheduled maintenance duties on a Saturday when we discovered that we had a 30,000 gallon leak in our water system. We were losing water at the rate of 11,000 gallons per hour. Since it was Saturday, and the anticipation was for a “full park” we knew we were in a bad spot. So, time being of the essence, we began to ferret out the disastrous water problem. We finally discovered that in the back of “D” rest room a large water line had blown apart because of a failure of a pressure reducer up the line.

This break literally filled the entire back room of the rest room building with water up to a level of about thirty inches. When I went to open the door to the back room, this water created a huge resistance to my opening the door. I had to brace my shoulder against the door and push with my legs to get the door open. The water cascaded out the door and I waited until the water flood subsided and ran out the door before the problem could be diagnosed and at least bypassed. (It was later discovered that the water had partially submerged a large electrical panel which housed a 220 volt electric circuitry system. Since the door I was pushing against was a hollow core steel door, the only thing which stopped me from being electrocuted was the protecting had of God.)

The burst water line was, for the moment, not repairable and we had to improvise rest room facilities for the throngs of people who were not aware how close they had come to the entire park being out of water. The obvious question we asked ourselves as we dealt with one angry person after another was, “are we having fun yet?” It did not matter to the public who needed a rest room, but by the Grace of God, we saved the day.

These episodes show how we are able to ruin a perfectly good learning experience by focusing on the wrong facet of life. In one case the lesson learned by those who book the picnics was do not over book, and use some common sense before allowing hay rides, dunking booths which use water, and large popular rock bands which draw crowds. In the other case, the lesson learned was that no matter how assiduously the water lines are inspected, we still must be prepared for unforeseen events and they must be handled as best we can, given what we have to deal with at the time. I personally learned of how closely God watches over me in situations that I take for granted at the time. I became abundantly clear one part of what Jesus meant when He said “I am with you always”.[1]

When the Children of Israel left the oppression of Pharaoh and set out following Moses across the desert bound for the Promised Land, they quickly forgot about the ten plagues God sent down on the Egyptians to deliver them from bondage. They fearfully proclaimed the benefits of the tyranny they had been enslaved by for over four hundred years as they found themselves sandwiched between Pharaoh’s approaching army and the Red Sea. They, like I, focused on the

problem, not on the solution. The saga ends by Moses rising up Aaron's rod and God dividing the sea allowing the Israelites to cross on dry ground; after which the entire army of Pharaoh was drowned in the sea when Pharaoh defiantly made one last vain attempt to usurp God's rightful place.[2]

It has been my observation over lo these brief years of my life that too often Christians fail to realize that God has a time and a purpose for every thing, and the culmination of these experiences we so often grumble about ends with the realization that God makes all things beautiful in their time[3]. This realization usually comes about through the less than desirable experiences which cause use to give exasperated laments about how the quality of our life has been adversely affected in some way. Sadly, Christians overlook the fact that it is not about our being served, but it is about our being in service. Moses was not "having fun" so to speak with all the grumblings and complaining which were directed towards God through him, but because he was the most humble man on the earth[4], God was able to use him to accomplish the higher goal of the deliverance of His chosen people from the tyranny of Pharaoh.

So, too, with life's set backs there is a higher calling toward which the strugglers within said set back must aspire. Solomon in all his wisdom overlooked that main calling and struggled on his own power to attain satisfaction in life. It was not until the end of his life of vanity and vain struggling, that he saw the light and came to the conclusion that we are to fear God and keep His commandments.[5]

All the situations in the park which were a major inconvenience to say the least and which caused us to lament not having fun yet were only a small cog on the wheel of the park operations. We were here for the public and not vice versa. We got through it in each and every situation.

Christians tend to forget that the same Guidance which delivered Moses and the Children of Israel is offered to us as believers in Christ. All we need to do is to turn to God and ask for help. It is amazing to me the many times I have suffered when there was no reason to do so, the many times I could have said I cannot do it alone, and the many times that a touch of Moses' humility could have saved me much pain. The question "are we having fun yet" should be answered no, but it is not supposed to be fun....It is supposed to lead us closer to God. He is the main Goal we all need to focus on and strive to serve....God.

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[1] Matthew 28:20

[2] Exodus 14: 10- 31

[3] Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11

[4] Numbers 12:3

[5] Ecclesiastes 12:13