

# Bull rides, wrestling matches; sermons should never be boring



## America's Heartland

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tor, "didn't you understand that this is a meeting of the board?"

"Yes," said the visitor, "and after today's sermon, I suppose I'm just as bored as the rest of these folks."

It seems to me that it takes great effort for a pastor to make the Word of God boring. In fact, there is nothing more exciting than the bible. It is action packed from beginning to end.

The greatest writers in this world have never been able to create fiction that begins to compare to the truth of the Scriptures. Elijah, a prophet of God, was a Rambo thousands of years before "Rambo" appeared on the Big Screen. Sampson was a Superman long before "Superman" became a superhero.

The afternoon TV soap

operas have never created a woman as villainous and conniving as Jezebel of the Old Testament or as beautiful and appealing as Esther. And, certainly, no one could ever create a plot more moving than that of a Father who allowed his only Son to be brutally killed in exchange for the lives of others.

Honestly, someone could easily argue that it's nothing short of sinful for preachers to make such an action-packed Book boring. Church would be beyond exciting if preachers would do nothing more than read the adventures of folks like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Congregations would be thrilled if pastors simply read about Daniel in the den of lions, or little David facing a giant named Goliath, or a fine

young man named Joseph being sold as a slave, thrown into prison only to rise through the ranks to become one of the most powerful men in the world, or of a good man named Stephen being stoned to death by an angry mob for no good reason, or of Paul standing before great leaders and proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, or of Jesus healing the sick, speaking words that allowed paralyzed men to walk again, restoring sight to the blind, making the deaf hear, feeding great multitudes of people with a couple little fish, dragging a cross up Mount Calvary where he'd be crucified, or, and especially, of Jesus being raised from the dead and walking out of that tomb, thus defeating death, hell and the grave.

Truly, it takes real talent to

make any of that boring. What it takes is someone who strays from the Scriptures and adds bunk that probably shouldn't be included in sermons at all. We all know that the Word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. A preacher who stands before his congregation and starts swinging a two-edged sword will be anything but boring. Folks are going to be watching and listening very closely to that man.

Oh, for preachers to use the Bible as a sword instead of a sleeping pill.

If ever our pastors call a meeting of the church "bored," let's hope no one shows up.

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The pastor announced that the church's board members would meet immediately after the Sunday morning service.

When the board members gathered in a side room for the meeting, they noticed a visitor who had never attended the church before that day.

"My friend," said the pas-

## Kitchen Diva by Angela Shelf Medearis Casseroles Are One-Dish Wonders

I was looking for a baking pan in the back of a cupboard and inadvertently discovered I have quite a collection of casserole dishes. I started thinking about all the casserole recipes I've collected over the years. When I was a newlywed and novice cook almost 46 years ago, preparing a casserole was my "go-to" dinner recipe.

I decided to do some research on the origin of the casserole, and I discovered a photo of an ancient casserole dish



in a museum in Athens, Greece. Casseroles, both the dish and various recipes, have had a long and interesting culinary history.

There's some debate about the origin of the term "casserole" but most culinary historians think it's from the French word for "saucepan." Casseroles come in a variety of styles, but what they all have in common is that they are typically a large, deep dish used both in the oven and as a serving vessel. The word casserole also is used for the food cooked and served in the dish. The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America provides detailed information about casseroles:

"Casserole cookery has been around since prehistoric times, when it was discovered that cooking food slowly in a tightly covered clay vessel softened fibrous meats and blended succulent juices. With the addition or subtractions of leftovers or inexpensive cuts of meat, the casserole is flexible and economical in terms of both ingredients and effort. The classic casserole, a French dish, was originally made with a mound of cooked rice. Fannie Meritt Farmer's Boston Cooking School Cook Book (1896) had one casserole recipe, for Casserole of Rice and Meat, to be steamed for 45 minutes and served with tomato sauce.

"In the 20th century, casseroles took on a distinctive American identity. During the depression of the 1890s, the economic casserole provided a welcome way to stretch meat, fish and poultry. Certain items also were scarce during World War I, and leftovers were turned into casserole meals. The same was true during the Great Depression of the 1930s."

The casseroles we know today became popular in the 1930s during the Great Depression. Typically, casseroles are composed of a meat, starch, creamy sauce (after 1934, it was usually a creamed soup from a can) and a vegetable. Casseroles are an economical, one-pot meal, and can be prepared in advance for breakfast, lunch or dinner. During the 1950s-'70s, casseroles became an easy way for a busy cook, and a modern

workforce composed of women, to prepare the family meal ahead of time.

Today, casseroles have been updated to include a variety of ingredients from lobster and tofu to made-from-scratch sauces and locally grown vegetables. The shape, size and construction materials of casserole dishes have also changed over its centuries-old history. However, the purpose of the casserole is still the same, to bring a familiar container of comfort food to the ones we love.

Bring a little comfort to your family and friends with this Sausage and Gumbo Casserole With Garlic Toast Topping, and enjoy a little history with each bite!

### Sausage and Gumbo Casserole with Garlic Toast Topping

- 1 pound smoked sausage, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium-size green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup instant roux mix, like Tony Chachere's Creole Instant Roux Mix
- 1 (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chiles, like Rotel's
- 1 (32-ounce) container chicken broth
- 1 (16-ounce) package frozen okra
- 1 cup quick-cooking rice, uncooked
- 1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (12-ounce) French baguette, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices

#### Fresh parsley, finely chopped for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a Dutch oven over high heat, 1-2 minutes. Add the sausage, green bell pepper and onion. Saute the sausage mixture for 8 minutes or until browned; stir in roux mix. Cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes.

2. Stir in tomatoes, chicken broth, okra, rice, Cajun seasoning and thyme. Bring mixture to a boil. Remove from heat. Pour into a 13- by 9-inch baking dish.

3. Stir together butter and garlic; brush on one side of bread slices. Top sausage mixture evenly with bread slices, buttered side up.

4. Bake, covered, at 425 F for 10 minutes. Then, uncover casserole dish and bake 10 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with parsley, if desired. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

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Angela Shelf Medearis is an award-winning children's author, culinary historian and the author of seven cookbooks. Her new cookbook is "The Kitchen Diva's Diabetic Cookbook." Her website is [www.divapro.com](http://www.divapro.com). To see how-to videos, recipes and much, much more, Like Angela Shelf Medearis, The Kitchen Diva! on Facebook. Recipes may not be reprinted without permission from Angela Shelf Medearis.

## Stumbling Blocks or Building Blocks?

Wednesday, February 10th, 2021 Message  
Bro. Warren Rogers, Retired Baptist Minister

### Matthew 16:21-28

Have you ever started to do something and something else got in your way? Have you ever volunteered for a job at the church and seems every time it gets your turn, you're too busy?

Satan puts stumbling blocks before us, and we can let them stumble us or we can take charge and build on them.

What does it take to build a building? – Good materials.

What does it take to build a church? – Good people.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-8. As we read this passage, ask yourselves, "Am I a stumbling block or am I a building block?"

Building block – Galatians 2:20, denying yourself is not starving yourself but is an attitude of living for Jesus and looking to fulfill His purpose.

Stumbling block – Living for yourself – Luke 12:16-21, a rich man was selfishly storing his food when he should have been sharing with the poor.

**Matthew 6:1-2**, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. <sup>2</sup>Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." We need to do good deeds without expecting praise from our fellow Christians.

Building Block – take up your cross – a condemned man carried it to his death – one way ride – could not jump off when he wanted to.

Luke 14:25-29, carrying our cross means we are willing to accept hardship for Christ. It is an attitude – I am going to serve Jesus everywhere and always, no matter what the cost.

Stumbling block – ignore the cross – people today want a crown without going through the cross. If we live in such a way as to ignore the cross, we are a stumbling block in God's kingdom

Following Christ verses, following the world: **Luke 14:24**, "For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Building block – who you follows matters – follow Jesus

**Matthew 16:24**, "take up his cross, and follow me." Come after me, suggests an effort on our part. Following Jesus is not just doing things but is having the correct attitude while doing them

Stumbling block – follow the world. **1 John 2:15**, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We become a stumbling block to those around us when we let the world control how we think and live.

**Jude 1:20-21**, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, <sup>21</sup>Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

**Ephesians 2:21**, "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

Friends, if you find yourself (being) a stumbling block, Jesus is always ready to take you back and help you to be a builder.

I can be reached at 606-481-0444. Until next week, may God bless you is my prayer!

Warren Rogers  
Retired Baptist preacher