

First Baptist Regina Weekly News

For the Week of August 9th, 2020

Jesus' calling was national and even global in nature. Jesus came to be the Messiah and King for Israel and the world. We might expect Jesus to have focused on people with power and authority and to work tirelessly to create and coordinate a massive political movement.



Instead, the gospels suggest Jesus spent plenty of his time paying attention to one person at a time. In one story, Jesus even paused on the way to save one person to pay attention to another. On the way to save a young girl, Jesus stopped to listen to a woman who had been ill for years.

When we think of what we are going through, it is wise and compassionate to remember the suffering of others. Whole nations and people groups are in desperate need of help.

God pays attention to everything going on—but is also concerned about what *you* are going through. God stops and listens to *you*.

May God sustain and encourage you today.

With love,

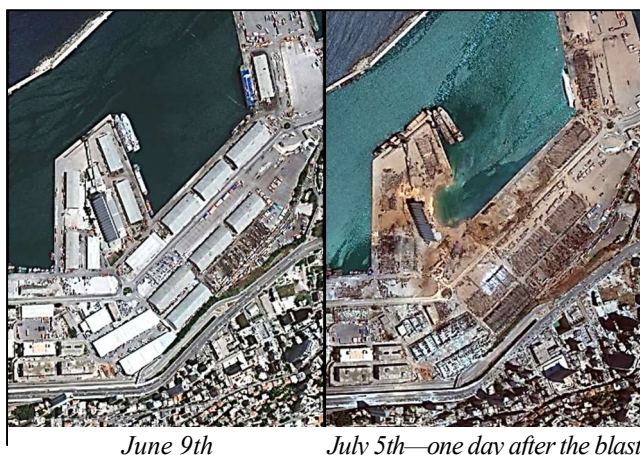
Pastor Joel



Disaster in Lebanon

Tuesday morning, August 4, word reached us of a massive explosion in Beirut's harbour. The friends we made last June were safe but the scenes were devastating and heartbreaking. More than 160 people were killed, 6000 injured, and 300,000 left homeless. The suffering and grief of the Lebanese people is unimaginable.

Our CBM (Canadian Baptist Ministries) partners there, the LSESD (Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development), moved quickly to respond. They have gone into the neighbourhoods closest to the blast site. Their relief organization, MERATH (Middle East Revive & Thrive), is reaching out with aid. The seminary conference centre has begun to welcome people left homeless.



[Visit CBM's website](#) for regular updates. CBM's interviews with [Joe Bridi](#), Lebanon National Field staff member, and [Nabil Costa](#), head of LSESD are very informative.

You may donate directly to the LSESD's response to this disaster via the [CBM website](#). We know this organization and have seen that their ministry is responsible and thorough. However, we encourage you to give to any agency as you feel led. As CBM is a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which is part of the Humanitarian Coalition, funds given through CBM will be matched by the federal government program announced last week.

[Watch the LSESD's initial video appeal.](#)

Prayer: Please keep Lebanon, the LSESD, and our friends, Emad and Almess Botros, and their sons, Timothy and Jonathan and all the staff there in your prayers these days. Food was already a concern before the destruction of their main port and the loss of grain silos. The country was already on the edge of total economic and political collapse. Over one million refugees remain in the country and Covid-19 has been on the increase.

For more information, feel free to contact [Joel](#) or Marilyn P. by phone or by email.



A damaged grain silo and a burnt boat can be seen a day after the blast. It is estimated that about 85 per cent of the country's grain was stored in these silos.

Spiritual Disciplines Series: Simplicity

Simplicity is the joyful unconcern for possessions we experience as we truly “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt 6:33). Persons living in simplicity realize freedom from anxiety by viewing possessions as gifts from God, remembering we are stewards to care for God’s gifts to us, and making our goods available to others. Simplicity is a declaration of war on materialism and it reorients our lives, perspectives, and attitudes.

There are a couple of important things here that the discipline of simplicity does for us: it reorients our lives around the spiritual over the material, putting God’s will first over and above anything else. Augustine states: “All plenty which is not my God is poverty to me.” Secondly, it helps us not only love God but also aids in our love for others because the less we consume or use, the more that is available for others. So when we think of the practice of simplicity we are both looking at the reorienting of our own desires in accumulating and reorienting our focus from self to other.

Kyle Bennet explains simplicity this way: “Simplicity is not a renunciation of material goods. Living simply does not mean we have to denounce material goods and condemn those who have them...Simplicity does not lead to a life of poverty. Living simply and living poorly are two distinct set of circumstances. To live simply doesn’t mean that we are constantly in a state of need...The one who lives simply is oriented in their acquiring, possessing, and consuming by what they need to survive, and maybe just enough to live a tad bit comfortably...One who lives simply does not go beyond their means of living. They do not get, keep, or use more than they need.”

Scripturally we find some encouragement to live simply in Jesus words:

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6:19-21; 24-25)

When it comes to practicing simplicity, here are a few helpful tips:

- Pay attention to what you buy and practice not buying more than you need. This can apply to clothes, food, tools, books, and so much more.

- Rather than buying, borrow what you can of things that you do not need to own. For example, if there is a book that you want to read, see if it is in the library before you choose to buy it. This can also apply to things that you would use for a particular job that only comes up once in a while; for example, if you have a hedge that needs trimming in your yard, rather than going out and buying a hedge trimmer, see if you can borrow one from a neighbour.
- Have a look through your home: are there things you own that you have not used for some time? Consider giving those items away to someone who could use them.

Tithes and Offerings

We want to thank everyone for their faithfulness in maintaining their giving during this pandemic. We know that many of you have gone out of your way to mail in your offerings or bring them to the church, and it is appreciated very much.

If you'd like to have your offering picked up, you can leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450, send an email to main_fbcregina@sasktel.net, or contact one of the pastors.

New Small Group: Reading Through the Old Testament

Beginning in September, Pastor Richard will be facilitating a new small group: "Reading Through the Old Testament." This group will meet online, using Zoom. A schedule will be provided with weekly readings. We will plan to connect once a week to discuss what we have read, share anything that has stood out to us, and ask any questions we may have. Please contact Pastor Richard at richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net, or leave a message at (306) 359-1450, if you are interested in joining. Watch for updates!

Learning for Life Series: A Study of the First Epistle of Peter

On Sunday, August 2, Bryan O. began facilitating a new online series in Learning for Life. The class explores what this epistle has to say to us today about our identity as believers and as a church, and how we should live in a society in which following Jesus increasingly puts one at odds with the surrounding society. For more information, please contact [Bryan](#) by email or leave a message at the church at (306) 359-1450.

What's happening at First?

Morning Prayer

Join us each morning, Monday to Friday at 7:15 am to begin your day with scripture and prayer, via Zoom. Visit our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for the link.

Children

The children are having a short break from meeting at this time. Watch for updates.

Youth

We will have fewer gatherings over the summer, but still plan to get together in smaller groups, or over Zoom, semi-regularly, so that we can stay connected and continue to build relationships.

Gospel of Mark Small Group

In May a new small group got underway via Zoom with two different meeting times: The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7pm and the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month at 10am. We are reading through the Gospel of Mark at about a chapter a week and meeting to discuss what we've read twice a month. This is not an in-depth study of Mark, but more a slow reading of Mark with informal discussion. Our conversation, along with highlights from Mark's Gospel, includes visiting to get to know each other better and praying together. We invite you to join us! Contact Pastor Richard (richard.fbcregina@sasktel.net) and he will get you connected.



I went to my sister's house and saw her packing a suitcase. I asked, "What's going on?" She said, "I'm feeling homesick." I suggested, "But you're at your home now." She replied, "I know. I'm sick of it!"

Q: What did the beaver say to the tree?

A: "It's been nice gnawing you!"

Q: Why didn't the sailors play cards?

A: Because the captain was on the deck.

Q: What did the mama cow say to the baby cow?

A: "It's pasture bedtime."

Do Not Judge

Pastor Joel's sermon from August 9, 2020

Numbers 12

Let us pray. Heavenly father, every week and ideally every day, we expose ourselves to your word, that your light might reveal those things in us that no longer belong. That won't belong and won't be a part of your kingdom when it comes. Those things which only lead to death. We pray that you would once again in your mercy, through your Holy Spirit, speak to us through your word, and accomplish your purposes in our lives. To your glory in your son's name we pray, amen.

So the moral of today's scripture lesson comes from the time of the exodus: The next time you're wandering in the desert for 40 years, be on your guard, because it's likely that you're going to start feeling tensions and frustrations with one another.

It is, of course, not just in the wilderness that that happens, even though, in one sense, what we are going through today is a wilderness of a kind. It's not an easy time for many of us. And so, perhaps it's not a bad lesson to draw from this story—to be on our guard against frustrations with one another and criticism of one another. To be prepared for those thoughts occurring to our minds and in our hearts.

But even in the good times, this behavior is a bad habit for many of us. Now, when pushed, few people would likely describe what they do in conversation as judging others. And yet, listen to our conversations. Listen to the conversations in coffee shops. Listen to the conversations over the phone or on the internet on social media. A major portion of what we spend our time talking about, is frequently criticism of another person for what they said or did.

And God is teaching us today through the story of Miriam criticizing Moses, and teaches us through the rest of scripture that, if we have a problem with what someone has said or done, first of all, we go directly and only to that person.

And that secondly, however, this should actually be very rare. It could be that someone has terrible flaws. That someone has sinned in an obvious and egregious way. But confronting someone about this should be rare. A few people talking about another person when that other person isn't there, ought to be rare. I think God is clear about this in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

But, looking at this story, Miriam had a concern. And before we get into what happened, I think it would be good to remind ourselves a little bit about who Miriam was. She comes

off poorly here in this story and it might be easy to miss that she was loved by God and by the people.

Miriam was most likely the oldest of the children in her family: Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. When she was a young girl, a slave with her family in Egypt, the pharaoh at the time had passed a law that all the Hebrew baby boys were to be killed at birth. And we hear that many of the midwives courageously protected the lives of these infants.

Moses' mother was one of these women who guarded her baby against death. And yet, the time came when she could no longer hide him. And so, still an infant, she wrapped Moses up, put him in a basket, and placed him into a river. Hiding nearby, again courageously, was Miriam.

Watching over her baby brother, ensuring that he was safe, she could not bring herself to abandon him. And when an Egyptian princess found Moses in the basket, Miriam courageously, boldly, approached her and asked if the princess needed a wet nurse for the baby. And then went to get her mother.

The next time we meet Miriam, she's much older. A woman now, it appears that she never married, but she is called the prophet. We know the story. The Hebrew people escape from Egypt. They come to the river. The pharaoh's army is behind them and they're trapped. But God opens the waters, leads them through, and defeats the Egyptian army. Moses sings a song that's long and theological, to some people's tastes. But the prophet Miriam grabs her tambourine and leads the people in singing and dancing.

In this story, when Miriam is sick with the skin disease, and had to be outside the camp for seven days until she was declared clean, the whole camp waited until she was able to rejoin them.

And Miriam was clearly loved by her brothers as well. Their anguish in today's story is immediate and unmistakable, even though thousands of years have passed.

Aaron immediately turns towards Miriam, saw that she was leprous, and he cries out, "Oh Lord, do not punish us for a sin that we have so foolishly committed." And Moses cries out to the Lord, "Oh Lord, please heal her."

Years later, when Miriam died, the people refused to move. They stayed put. And in that moment, the water ran out for the camp as well, as if nature was mourning. And the people quarrelled with Moses.

Hundreds of years later, Miriam was still honored. Through the prophet Micah, God recalled Miriam's leadership: "My people, I brought you up out of the land of Egypt. I

redeemed you from the house of bondage. And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

We do not say enough about the continuous string of great women who played key roles in the Old Testament. Miriam, and then Deborah, and then Hannah, and then Ruth.

Now today's lesson shows Miriam in a less favourable light. But let's keep in mind that God called Miriam to lead Israel as a prophet. Let's keep in mind that, thanks to her courage, Moses was kept safe as an infant and reunited with his family. Let's keep in mind that Miriam was dearly loved by her family and clearly loved by the people.

Now yes, in this story, she is corrected by God and quite strongly, severely. I suppose that knocks her down a few pegs. Let's see, this puts her in the same category, I suppose, as leaders such as Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon. In other words, this failure and discipline is not the final word on Miriam any more than it was for every single other leader that God called and loved.

Miriam had a problem with Moses. She wasn't going to waste any time. She wasn't going to shy away from it—she had confronted a princess as a child after all. Moses was clearly in the wrong. Something needed to be done, and so she went directly to her brother Aaron.

Now we don't know what the problem was, but they allowed their discussion about Moses, their concern about his behavior, whether it was sin or purity, they allowed that concern to transform and to lead to a discussion criticizing his leadership.

We also don't know what happened to Moses wife, Zipporah. Where did she go? She was his first Midianite wife. There's no word of her death but Moses appears to be marrying again.

Now if you go back to Jewish theologians from before Jesus time, if you go back to those commentaries, people have always wondered what, in fact, Miriam was upset about in this story. They've speculated that perhaps Moses treated Zipporah and this new wife, this Cushite wife, poorly. We don't know. But we do know this. If you have a concern about someone's behavior, if you have a problem with what they've done or said, we know, you go directly to that person. It was true then, it's true today.

Now psychologically, I understand why we go to our brother, why we go to our sister, why we go to somebody else. It's not so simple, is it, to just confront someone. There are times when I bring up my concern with someone else because maybe they will help me see I'm wrong about my thought. Or maybe they will help me see my concern differently.

Or there are times when I think so and so would do a better job of confronting this person.

But surprisingly, there are few stories in the Bible where one person rightly confronts another person on their own. There are plenty, where God uses someone to confront another person. One that leaps to all of our minds, I'm sure, is where Nathan the prophet is sent by God to confront King David, after David killed a man and took his wife.

But most of the scenes where one person, of their own, confronts another person, even if it's about something wrong they've done, those stories are presented in a negative light. And it leads to the question, "Should you bring up, should we ever bring up, a concern we have about someone else?"

Well, Jesus teaches us at least one time that we can do this. When *you* are the one who has been wronged. When someone harms *you*. And Jesus, in Matthew chapter 18, tells us, step by step, how to go about confronting a person. First of all, go directly to them. Tell them what they did and what it did, what it meant, to you. And if they refuse to listen, if they refuse to be reconciled and make things right, then you can go to a second person and go together with them. If they *still* refuse to be part of reconciliation and restoration, then Jesus says to gather the congregation and have them speak to this person.

But what happens in this story? Well, Miriam was not the one who was harmed. Now the concern, perhaps, that some might raise is, "What happens if a confrontation needs to take place but there's an imbalance of power—say a wife who's being abused by her husband? Is it right to say that it's up to her to confront the person?"

Well, once again Jesus words allow for justice to take place. They allow for the protection of the vulnerable, for the protection of those who have less power. The group is there to support and to confront as well, in the right order.

But in this story, was Miriam the one harmed? What else can we notice? Miriam and Aaron never actually make it to Moses with their concerns. God heard what was going on and then summoned her, Aaron, and Moses to come out and to meet with God.

God is involved, present and active. Not just in cosmic events, not just in global changing events, but also in family squabbles, in family trouble, in problems between friends and confronting sin and resolving conflict. God is present and active.

And notice what God said. It's not that they were not prophets. God said, "I speak to Moses." Now yes, God here is countering their complaints about Moses being the prophet and the leader. They had said, "Aren't we also prophets?" God doesn't dispute that. God is primarily saying, "Moses is different. I speak to Moses directly."

But I wonder if the implication is also there that God is saying, “If Moses sins, do you think I'm going to keep quiet about it? I speak to him face to face. If there's a concern, do you think that perhaps I might raise it with him?”

Now whose hands would you rather be in? Under whose control would you rather be? Would you rather be under the correction and discipline of another person, or the correction and discipline of God?

God is the one who truly sees all that's going on in our hearts and minds. God is the one who sees all that we are going through. And God can see the context when we sin. God sees the span of our entire lives. He sees how far we have come in grace. And when we sin, God sees all of that and is able to account for it.

That is not something that any of us as humans are able to do. Who is more likely to do a better job then, of looking at someone's sin and evaluating what ought to be done? Whether this was the particular sin that needs to be addressed at this particular time? Because, let's be honest, just because you find a sin in yourself or in others, that doesn't mean it's the only one that's there. It's the one that's most obvious in the moment. Perhaps there is something less obvious and far more insidious that God is trying to deal with.

And so we submit both our own self-evaluation and the evaluation of others, we submit that to God's control. Correcting us and correcting other people must be primarily God's responsibility. This pattern is consistent in scripture. If someone sins against you, if you have a problem, if you feel it must be raised with them, then you go to that person directly, or not at all.

But secondly, we should not judge others. In 1 John 5:16 it says that if you see your brother or sister committing a sin, you should what? Ask God to give them life. We should pray. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 1, Paul says, “You have people behaving immorally in your congregation. You should...” —what? “Mourn.” In Romans 14: 4, Paul says, “Who are you to pass judgment on the servants of another? It is before their own Lord that they stand or fall.”

Now one time and one time only, with *massive* qualifications, does Paul encourage people to confront someone. In Galatians 6:1, he says, “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, those who have the spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.”

So the goal here, is not to show them they're wrong. It's not to expose them. The goal, the heart of it, the aim is to restore them. That's the spirit of it. And if that spirit is not there in the critical words or the judgment, then we should not be part of confronting someone.

But Paul goes on and qualifies it: “Bear one another's burdens. Put up with each other's sin, and in this way, you'll fulfill the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something (he's talking about us—we're nothing and here we are, judging someone else thinking we're something), they deceive themselves. Instead, all must test their own work rather than their neighbor's work.”

There are so many examples of this throughout the New Testament. I encourage you to search for them and find them.

I first had this principle impressed upon me by C.S. Lewis in the Narnia series. In almost every story, the characters come before Aslan and will say, “Well what about him?” And Aslan always says, “That is none of your business. That is between me and that person. I am here talking with *you* now.”

This isn't saying that sin is okay. It isn't saying that sin doesn't matter. Now we might even propose some positive reasons why we *long* to bring something up and confront someone, or talk about someone behind their back about these problems that are going on. This tension that we feel when we're sure that what they're saying and doing is wrong.

Maybe it's because we want family unity. We want to all be on the same page. And this person here, this crazy person, they hate Trump. Or this person loves Trump. We want to get along and so we need to resolve this. We need to confront them. How could you say that about Trump? He's wonderful! How could you say this about Trump? He's awful!

We want to be unified, and so we bring up and confront people about what they think we think is wrong. Or we're concerned about the direction of the whole community. So-and-so is saying this it's wrong. They're behaving this way. It's sinful. It's going to affect all of us.

Or perhaps we're worried about the safety or the well-being of others. If this sin could really harm people, shouldn't we confront it? Shouldn't we expose it? This person is advocating something that is clearly wrong scientifically. Shouldn't we expose it? This person is saying something that's clearly wrong politically. Shouldn't we confront them?

But even here, scripture cautions us again and again. Our very first impulse out of sin is to control. It was the impulse that Adam had. It was the impulse that Eve had. To control each other. To dominate. To be God. There is the human desire to be proved right. To be justified.

And so we must ask ourselves, “Are those the true goals and the aims? Is that the struggle that's going on within us when we confront someone? Is restoration of relationship, is that our primary goal?

Miriam was caught. She was humbled. She had failed. What was left? God healed her immediately. She continued to be loved by her community, and she was still the prophet. God never took that away.

The same is available to us when we sin. When we criticize someone else. When we gossip. We can repent. We can be healed. We will find that, once again, we are loved by the people in this congregation. That we are loved and forgiven by God.

We are all here in the same situation. Every last one of us has done and said and thought in our hearts and minds, things that we should not have. And we have left things undone when we ought to have done them or said them. And so we are all under the same judgment.

Thank God, that that judgment is in the hands of Jesus Christ. There is, therefore, no room for us to pass judgment on others. The words of Jesus and Luke: "Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven."

The first habit to help wean ourselves off of criticism, the criticism of what others say and do, is daily confession. To every day, ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, to examine what's wrong within us. To look for that log and to begin to work on it. And yet, to find that we are forgiven. We are loved.

It was the same in the exodus. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, their whole generation, including them, was under the same judgment. And yet the same offer of forgiveness and redemption was available to them. God spoke with them, walked with them, and honored them after their deaths.

May God likewise have mercy on us and empower us to have the same love and mercy on one another in this congregation and on the people that we see and meet in the world.

Tithing during the pandemic

With the COVID-19 crisis limiting contact with others and restricting meetings of groups, please do not neglect the financial needs of our church.

We have several ways to provide your regular tithes and donations to the church:

1. Mail your gifts to the church or call and leave a message at (306) 359-1450 to arrange for an in-person pick-up. Please place your cheque in your regular offering envelope (or any envelope marked "Offering"), and seal that inside another envelope addressed to the church:

First Baptist Church
2241 Victoria Ave, Regina, SK S4P 0S4.

2. Establish a **Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR) Plan**. This will automatically transfer funds from your account into the FBC Regina account on a regular basis. Please email the church or contact the Treasurer if you would like to set up PAR, or change your commitment.
3. Make an online donation:
 - Use **Interac e-Transfer** to donate from your phone or computer to FBCRegina@gmail.com (*no fee or cost to the church*)
 - Use a credit card with a PayPal account via the **PayPal Giving Fund** (*no fee or cost to the church... 100% of your donation reaches us and contributes to our mission*)
 - Use a credit card or PayPal via **CanadaHelps** (*a fee of 4% is deducted from the donation*)
 - Use a credit or debit card via **FBC ChurchTrac** (*the church is charged a fee of approximately 3% for each donation*)

PLEASE refer to our website at firstbaptistregina.ca for more specific information on these contribution methods. You may also contact the treasurer at (306) 775-1497 or email the church at main_fbcregina@sasktel.net for further details.

The Benefits of Online Giving (especially during the pandemic)

1. No mailing, dropping off, or picking up of tithes is required.
2. The church receives e-Transfers immediately... no waiting for the tellers to physically count and deposit the cash and cheques.
3. It is actually SAFER! Did you know that every cheque you write has ALL your bank account information on it (those computer-like numbers at the bottom)? As well as your name and address. Also, cash and cheques can be misplaced or lost in the mail.

4. Signing up for PAR means you don't have to remember to provide a weekly or monthly offering, and ensures the church has a steady source of revenue to cover expenses. Only the treasurer and the bank would initially see your banking information for registration.
5. Interac e-Transfers are easy to use and secure. Your money doesn't actually travel by email or text message – just the notifications and deposit instructions. The receiving and sending banks transfer the funds to each other using established and secure banking procedures with encryption and authentication. No one sees your banking information.

NOTE: Giving via CanadaHelps and PayPal Giving Fund are less attractive as they do not distribute the funds to us immediately. Depending on when the donation was made, we may wait until the following month to receive it. As well, CanadaHelps deducts a fee for every donation. However, the donor receives a tax receipt immediately, so the church does not have to issue one.

That being said, we will definitely accept your tithes and offerings by any method you choose. Please let the church know if we can assist in any possible way. THANK YOU!



On their way to get married, a young Catholic couple was involved in a fatal car accident. The couple found themselves sitting waiting for St. Peter outside the Pearly Gates. While waiting, they began to wonder: Could they possibly get married in Heaven? When St. Peter showed up, they asked him. St. Peter said, "I don't know. This is the first time anyone has asked. Let me go find out," and he left. The couple sat and waited, and waited. Two months passed and the couple were still waiting. While waiting, they began to wonder what would happen if it didn't work out; could you get a divorce in heaven? When St. Peter finally returned, looking somewhat bedraggled. "Yes," he

informed the couple, "You can get married in Heaven." "Great!" said the couple, "But we were just wondering, what if things don't work out? Could we also get a divorce in Heaven?" St. Peter, red-faced with anger, slammed his clipboard onto the ground. "What's wrong?" asked the frightened couple. "OH, COME ON!" St. Peter shouted, "It took me three months to find a priest up here! Do you have any idea how long it'll take me to find a lawyer?"