

Sunday, April 30, 2023

Scripture Reading: John 10:1-10

Actions speak louder than words but not nearly as often. — Mark Twain

Three strikes and you're out. It's the law in some states, and it is certainly the law in baseball.

Unless you are Yordan Álvarez of the Houston Astros. He gets *four* strikes. It happened last season on August 3, 2022, when the Boston Red Sox were in town. In the bottom of the fourth inning at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Alvarez went to the plate as the Designated Hitter. Rich Hill, the 42-year-old Boston starter, threw low for ball one, but then tossed a curve ball for strike one. Alvarez then fouled a second pitch for strike two. Hill then threw a sidearm fastball which was called a strike.

He should have been called out and sent back to the dugout. But everyone, Alvarez himself, the umpire, pitcher, catcher and even the broadcasters didn't notice the mistake.

Alvarez stayed in the batter's box and then grounded out.

Can you imagine the confusion and mayhem if he had used his fourth strike to launch the ball over the left field fence?

In the legal system, people who have three strikes against them are known as habitual offenders or persistent offenders. Or, *they are known as the inhabitants of Judah during the prophet Jeremiah's life in ancient Judah.*

In Jeremiah 7:1-7, God is the umpire. And God reminds Judah that three strikes and they're out. They are done for. Strike one is called in verse 3: *Improve your conduct and actions.*

Strike two is in verse 4: *Don't trust in lies.*

Strike three is in verse 5: *Reform your ways and your actions; if you treat each other justly.*

Note the stress on one's actions. It is not enough to profess our belief in some doctrine or ethical system. We must also illustrate that we are willing to walk the talk, and live in a manner that dovetails with our religious language.

If our actions are not gracious and kind and if we don't love justice, it doesn't really matter what we say, does it? And when our actions *are* gracious and kind, when we *do* love justice, well then you might say we've hit it out of the park!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: O God, may I work with the balls and strikes given to me. Help me to have actions that match my faith language. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

*Blessings,
Lisa & Pastor Ben Metz*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Luke 18-21

Monday: 1 Samuel 21-24

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 25-28

Wednesday: 1 Samuel 29-31

Thursday: 2 Samuel 1-4

Friday: 2 Samuel 5-8

Saturday: Psalms 46-48

Verse to Remember
God is our refuge and strength, an
ever-present help in trouble.

—Psalm 46:1 (NIV)

**Which foreign word
doesn't belong?**

oui si nein ja

Which word doesn't belong?

**fedora, beret, moccasins,
sombrero, wig**

Senior Trivia Quiz: DO YOU REMEMBER RADIO?

1. THE JACK BENNY SHOW: Can you name two characters who appeared with Benny?
2. FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY: What place is still referred to as "McGee's" today?
3. BURNS AND ALLEN: How did George Burns end every show?
4. THE SAINT: Do you remember the Saint's name?
5. THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL: Can you name the Pimpernel's alter ego?
6. THE MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR: Why was one particular broadcast so memorable?
7. WALTER WINCHELL'S JOURNAL: How did Winchell open each show?
8. MAJOR BOWES AND THE ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR: How were winners chosen?

Solution to riddles: Foreign word: *nein*; it is the only word that doesn't mean "yes"; word: moccasins; it is the only word that doesn't refer to something worn on the head. **Do You Remember Radio?:** 1. Mary Livingstone and Rochester; 2. That crowded closet that would open to sound effects of all kinds of things crashing to the floor; 3. "Say good night, Gracie." Gracie would reply, "Good night, Gracie"; 4. Simon Templar; 5. Sir Percy Blakeney; 6. Orson Welles, the show's star, then 22, did such a great acting job, that many in the country believed they had tuned into a news broadcast and the invasion of Martians was indeed real; 7. "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. North and South America, and all the ships at sea, let's go to press. FLASH!"; 8. Most of the radio audience had telephones in their homes, and they called in to vote for their favorite acts.