

Etoonin' Incorporated - All for the Lord

2020.09.20

The Cheater Issue

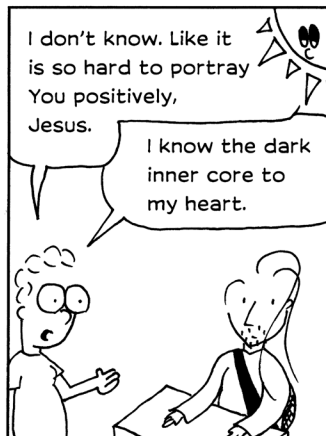
XXI/163

There are only six cartoons this issue. I cheated by my standards. But by Mindy's standards, she will read any Etoonin' with cartoons, so there is that...

toon in'...

Warm up

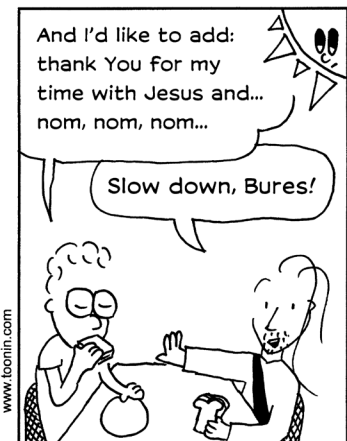
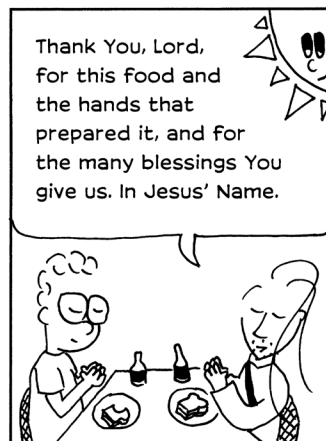
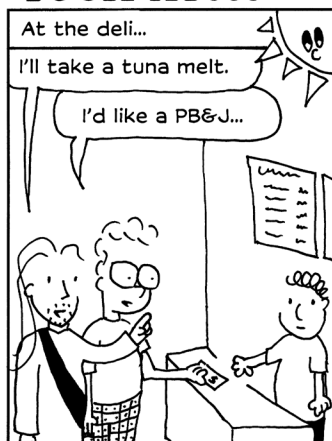
August 19th, 2020



toon in'...

Hankerin'...

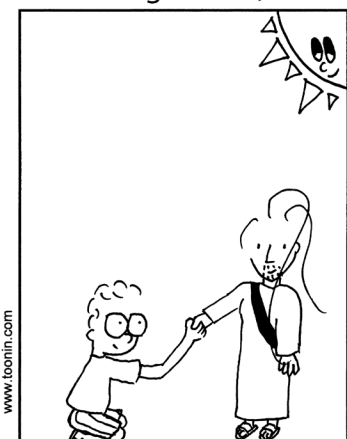
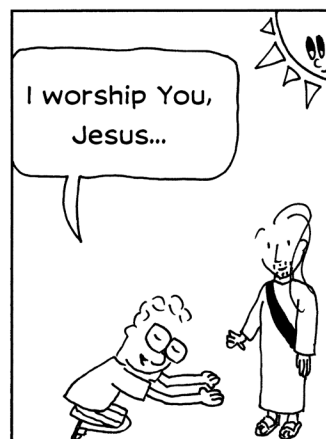
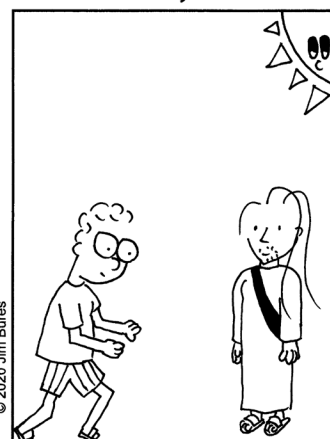
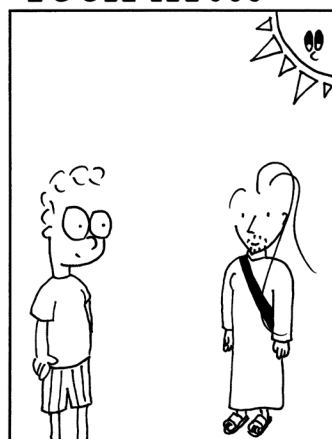
August 19^{1/2}, 2020



toon in'...

Sinach - Way Maker

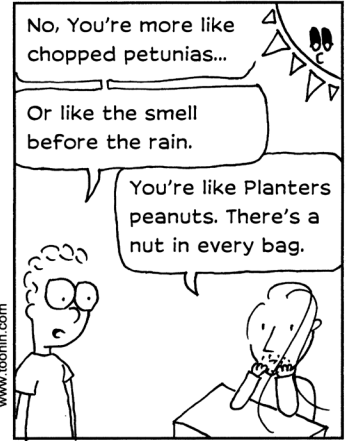
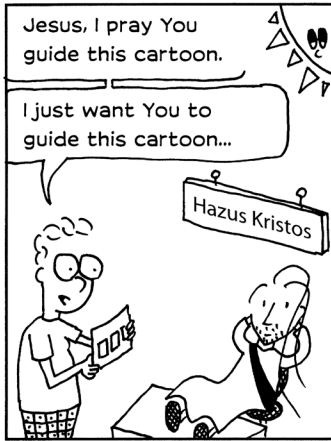
August 21st, 2020



toon in'...

The Sidewalk Shuffle

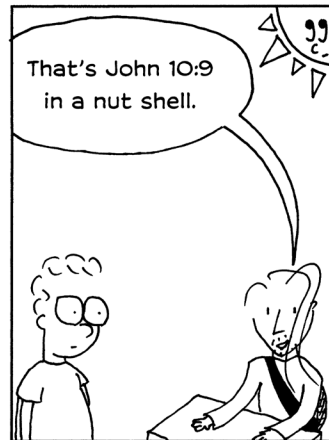
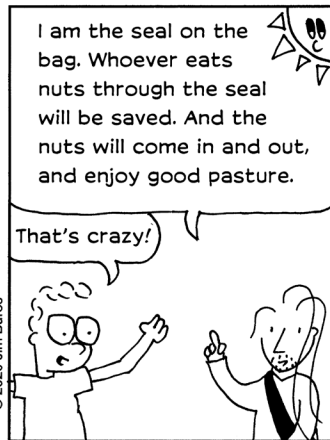
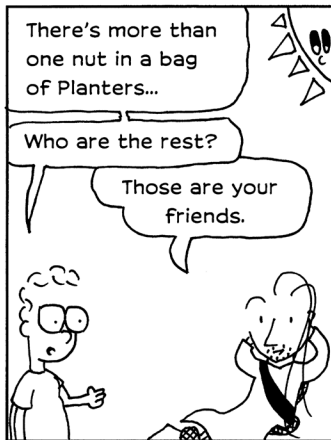
August 25th, 2020



toon in'...

Planting the Seeds...

August 25^{1/2}, 2020

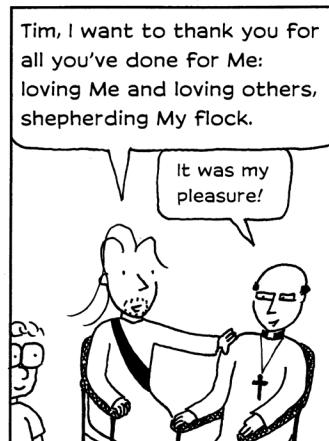
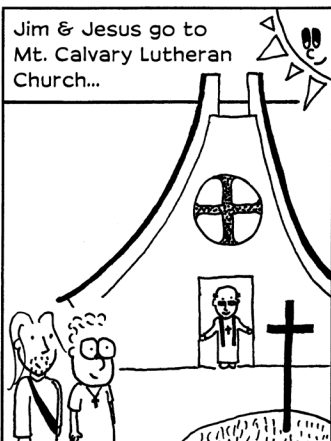


My Pastor retired, so I drew him this cartoon...

toon in'...

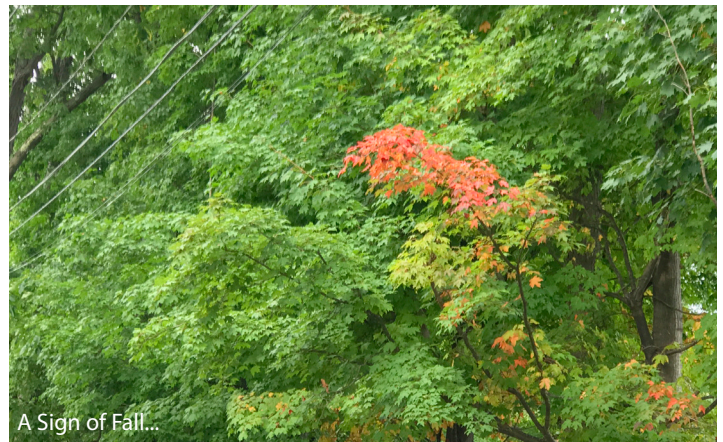
10,000 Reasons to thank Pastor Timothy Knapp

August 31st, 2020



This life can be blessed and lived on the terms of truth...

~Jim Bures 9/14/2020



So, I decided not to quit Raytoonin' for now. All opinions subject to change. I think that I'll be back to work in either one week or three, depending on what the disability people say. I asked for two extra weeks. You may or may not remember that my last issue mentioned how I wanted to quit my job by cartoon. I decided to send the issue to my boss and somehow, just somehow, the issue made it to HR. So I had a lot of "splanin" to do. Typical Jim Bures. I explained that I didn't want to quit, but didn't want to suffer either. Only the Mighty Jim Bures can get away with this stuff.

For some reason, God loves me even though I don't really love myself. I don't get the suffering He puts me through, but what can I do? There must be some reason for it. I surmise that if I hadn't suffered for 23 years with bipolar disorder, I wouldn't know God as well as I do. Some people seem amazed by my faith. But still, I am rotten down to my core and I know it. I don't think there's any cure in this life. I know all the good things God has done for me and sometimes I still long for the days before I knew Him: my own personal Egypt. I had all the girls I could want. Anyway, probably not good to focus on. This life seems pierced with pain. It is so weird that we're called to hate this world though stuck in it.

I love to write. I love to talk about myself. Sometimes, I try to make the toons more generic, but for this issue I just wanted to push them out so I could do the writing. I am trying to give the writing to God more too, so He can encourage you. But I just love to write about myself. I don't even enjoy drawing cartoons anymore. I only do it so I can write.

I tried to explain to my therapist what it is like drawing all these cartoons for an audience of, at most, 24 people. I guess my audience is growing, but it is a lot of work to draw the

cartoons, scan them, put the cartoon bubble text in and then write the issue. I do all this work for free, which makes me feel like I am doing it for nothing. My therapist doesn't seem to understand my desire for fame. Not that desiring fame is a good thing, but it is disappointing that I have poured 24 years of my life into cartoons with nothing much to show. I know there is still a chance, but it seems slim. I don't even like drawing cartoons anymore. It used to be so much fun. I remember reading books about cartooning and how exciting it was to think about success as a cartoonist.

Cartoons about Jesus just don't sell. There is a band I like called, "The NBJ Band." The Nothing But Jesus Band. Their songs are Jesus talk to classic rock tunes. And the quality of their production is very good! The songs rock, but they are all about Jesus. There is one so sweet: "Just ask Jesus to save you, won't you ask Him today?" It comes with an elegant guitar solo. I don't even remember where I heard them. There is no way to purchase their music. The band is now lost to obscurity. They only played at Churches, I'm sure. I had such high hopes of being in a newspaper, but the hard truth is that no one cares about Jesus stuff. I was trying to express the loss I feel to my therapist, but he didn't get it.

I was trying to express how, when I make music, I don't want to make it for God. I don't want to make it for others. I just want to make it for me. I want to make music I like. I don't want it clouded with the desire for commercial success. I want my music to be pure in a way that my cartoons are not. My cartoons are tainted with unrealized desires.

I categorize myself as lazy. I don't want to work as an engineer. But nothing I have ever really wanted to do comes with money, so now I don't even want to do it anymore.

I tell my house mate frequently that I wish life were over. He always laughs: the right response. Jesus says, in John 12:25, "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." What is the point of living if we are supposed to hate our life? This dovetails with how I hate my heart: a restless goblet of

hatred and poison. But still, what is the point of this stupid life? 1 John 2:15 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world." Hello, Jesus? You stuck us down here! This isn't exactly encouragement to pick up my cross to do a job while suffering rampant anxiety and depression. What I get paid for holds almost no meaning to me, save loving coworkers.



And then there are relational problems. Except for my Dad, no one follows Jesus in my family. Every family function leaves me feeling miserable as they have their gay fun. I just can't relate to them. I've tried to explain Jesus to them through letters, but they just ignore them. I love my nieces and nephews, but being with family is not fun for me. However, I will say that being with my sister and her family alone is generally fun. I like being around them. But add anyone else to the mix and it is a recipe for misery and self-sacrifice. I write everyone birthday cards, but secretly I feel they hate me because of Christ. How can I write cartoons and pretend like the Christian life is something to aspire to?

I definitely hate my life in this world, but do I really even know Jesus either? I can't say I do. I kind of know about Him, and some principles from the Bible that work. I think He protects me. Every time I try to quit a job, He steps in. It is weird: He controls a thousand variables on the outside, but doesn't change my heart from the inside. It is like He controls so many details to bless me and take care of me, when I just wish He'd change my heart to make me feel better. I don't feel like I "have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." I mean, I pray to Him all the time, and that makes me feel closer, but I can't really say I know what He is like. I wish I could just sit with Him and talk to Him see what makes Him laugh and get an encouraging word. And don't get me started on Christian Radio and the schlock they turn out. I love Christian music, but they act like Jesus is so real. It just seems phony to me. I wish Jesus Himself would appear and give me a hug. I know such pain because I follow Him. When I first met God, so to speak, I had it all wrong. I thought I had reached Him, when really I had reached death. God didn't turn out to be who I thought He was. I guess I don't get to define that, but I never would have guessed He came with such suffering. I guess I wouldn't choose eternal death, but I got duped as to what Life is like, that's for sure.

So I have told you all about the cross I bear, but did I tell you about the others on their crosses nearby? There is one guy named Rich who tells me to call anytime. Well, I called him the other night and we talked for 75 minutes! I was able to express some of my job related suffering, and gain encouragement from him. It is about the only thing that keeps me going: encouragement. He works at Raytoonin' with me. I remember Art kept me going at my last job, but in more practical ways, like helping me to do my actual job duties. Anyway, Rich and Mike are part of the Sweet Spot Bible Study at work. We meet over Zoom. I had the guys out to Evviva's Trattoria and we hung out for hours. They both say, "Call anytime" to me, even though I've never said, "Call anytime" to anyone. It really helps that they say that, even though I don't really do it. I've learned to spread the manure.

There is grace in other things, too. Over Labor Day, I visited Cape Cod, staying with Will and Karen. I was worried it would feel like "work." But somehow, we got along great, just like being with other believers! We drove to Truro and went swimming during low tide at their favorite beach. After lunch, we drove to Provincetown and walked around for 30 minutes. They remarked how the day went better than they could have planned. We finished the day with Will grilling vegetables for dinner. I can't remember what Will and I talked about, but it was a special time. When the Holy Spirit moves in things like this, then it feels good to be alive.

Well, I'll end it here, folks. Thanks for reading this far. I always appreciate feedback. I hope, in some small way, my honesty with my spiritual life will encourage you. Maybe I err on the side of telling too much, but I'd rather be real than draw cartoons about pot luck dinners and pretend like Church life is so great. It really is in some strange way, but I always hope that something I produce would encourage an unbeliever to pick up their cross and follow Him too.