

### *Hard to Fake a 12 on a Par 3*

Christ the Redeemer Church  
July 25, 2010  
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost/Green

Luke 11:1-13  
Rev Gary L. Smith  
[www.christredeemerchurch.com](http://www.christredeemerchurch.com)

I hope each of us hears the Gospel today. May even those of you who are not golfers or duffers hear the Good News this morning.

Jesus gives sound, clear, bottom line advice to us in this morning's Scripture reading. Do not give up. God, your heavenly Father who created you and loves you, will not give you, His child, a snake if you ask him for a fish.

What are you desperately praying for this morning? Peace? A job? For your marriage? For the pain in your child's life to be bearable? For purpose in life? For freedom from years of horrible dreams? For some level of happiness in some relationship? For health?

Lord, teach us to pray. Then Jesus says, however you are praying, do not give up. Perseverance in Prayer. Keep knocking on the door, as this lesson tells us this morning.

The AC went out on Pam's new VW on our way to Alabama. It was 105 degrees heat index along the way. The VW Service manager in Montgomery, Alabama said he could not get Pam's car into the repair shop for 10 days due to work backlog. I thanked him, remained at his desk, and kept making conversation. Politics, the economy, Montgomery, the Air Force, etc. After 30 minutes of standing in front of his desk, he said, "You are not going away, are you?" I said, "I have no where else to go. I have no option." He worked me in and found the defective Expansion Valve O-ring, replaced it, and had me on the road by noon. I had no options. Sometimes in life we have no options except desperate prayer in our lives.

I enjoyed hearing some bottom line Alabama advice this past week, given from a father to a son. When the son was laying sod in a three-month long backyard landscaping project his father told him, "Green side up."

When the son borrowed his father's chain saw and ladder to get up into some trees to cut some limbs so the new sod, planted with the green side up, could get more sunlight, the father said, "Son, never cut off the limb you are standing on in a tree."

Alabama is a big hunting state. A manager in the county office told me Friday, "Some guys here so love hunting that they will quit a very good job when hunting season starts. One guy called in to quit and we asked him why he was quitting and he told us 'hunting season is startin' next week.'" Texans understand that kind of thinking.

Two members of this church have already asked me if Amity's fiancé Will is going to take THEM hunting out west after Will and Amity marry in February. Amity selected

February for a wedding date because she asked Will to give her a month when there is no hunting season anywhere in the United States. February it is.

While out in Alabama this week helping Amity to get done some things for her wedding, like her mother shopping for a wedding dress with her and other minor matters, I was able to plan a dream golf tournament at the famous Robert Trent Jones Golf Resort in Auburn. Tournament will be the day before the wedding, on February 25, 2011 at the Lake Course. 9 am -- consecutive tee-times. Some Air Force friends and I have talked for years of gathering at Robert Trent Jones resort in Auburn for a golf tournament. February is a perfect month for a golf tournament...I mean, perfect for a wedding in Alabama.

I played golf this past week twice on this famous golf course. On Thursday my partner and I were playing a par 3 hole. 232 yard par three. Elevated tee. Over water. Woods on the left. Woods on the right. Weeds before and after the water. Then back up a hill to an elevated green. Dream hole. I had the tee box and I hit my first one in the water. I hit my second shot just right of the green, pin high. Lying, I mean, laying, three. I figured I had lost the hole.

My playing buddy hit his shot into the woods. It hit a tree and dropped straight down. I walked down to the water to see if I could find my first shot. While down in the little valley, I saw some remarkable things.

My golfing buddy hit three balls into the water, after flubbing two shots on the side of the hill. Downhill shots with bad ball position. He was suddenly lying 7, getting ready to hit his 8th shot at the green. I was back in the game and celebrating. Counting my winnings.

I would have quit and picked up after two water balls. I would have conceded the hole.

He never quit. He just kept swinging. He kept walking back to his cart and bag and getting another ball. Then hit and swing and another splash. Another ball in the water. I stood motionless. It was a lesson in Perseverance. Persistence.

He hit his 8<sup>th</sup> shot into the water. Splash. Right by my head. I moved away from the water.

Then HE took his 8-iron and threw it nearly 100 yards...into the lake. I was so impressed. All golfers and computer owners want to do that at times but rarely do we play with men who have the courage to throw a club INTO the water.

He threw the club further than he hit any ball with that iron. He has a very good and strong arm. Club went 50 or 60 yards into the drink.

He calmly walked back to his cart, got a 7 iron, got another ball, dropped it and hit again. His 10<sup>th</sup> shot or so...I lost count. It landed over the green. A 7 iron was too much club but his 8 iron was no longer usable...it was in the drink.

I chipped up and rolled in a one putt for a 5 and won the hole easily. He got a legitimate 12. Hard to fake a 12.

Will sank his putt for an easy "12" and then calmly took his 7 iron down to the water and walked around in the weeds. He ignored the fact that water moccasins and copperhead snakes were in the weeds and water...he prodded around and found his 8 iron.

Men say nothing to each other during such sacred moments. We sat in silence. Then I said, "I thought your iron was IN the water." He said, "I started to throw it in the water but then I remembered the set of clubs was worth more with the set intact...with all clubs. So I threw it hard enough to get OVER the water." I said, "That was a heck of a throw to get it over the water. You could not even hit the ball over the water in 7 tries." He said, "I know." We drove to the next hole in silence. I had just seen a man with courage on the course.

I told him, "Will, this is just between you and me. What happens on the course stays on the course. Trust me. Just a secret between us men." He just looked at me.

His dad told me, "Sometimes you just gotta throw the clubs. Sometimes you just gotta do that." He is so right. Some times you just gotta throw the club in the water in life. Sometimes life IS too frustrating.

Jeff, their friend, threw his entire bag of clubs, one club at a time, in the lake. Then he took his bag off the cart and threw the empty bag in the lake. Then he drove away. Then he drove back to the lake, took off his shoes and socks jumped into the lake and disappeared under the surface of the water. He came up and walked back to the cart, empty handed.

He got into the cart and held up his keys. He said, "My car and house keys were in the bag. I had to get my keys." Silence.

They showed me the house where Jeff lives. He has a lake in front of his house. One day his new lawnmower was acting up. So he just threw the new mower into the lake. I really want to meet this guy Jeff at the wedding. His 4-year old daughter watched him throw his lawnmower into the lake. He told her, "Never tell anyone what you just saw."

I asked Will later why he carried his 7 iron to the water to look for his 8 iron. "To kill any snakes that might attack me." You gotta be smarter than the snakes in life.

My golfing partner Will told me, "I come from a family who believes in sticking together and working things out."

His 12 on a par 3 hole made me a believer. You can not fake a 12 on a par 3 hole when money is on the line. He never quit. Keep swinging. Oh, he played great golf after tossing

his 7 iron into the weeds. Amen. (*Ralph told me at communion, "He should have used his driver and tossed IT into the drink."* Amen. Drivers **should** be tossed into the drink.)