

SKIT 3 - THE MONK(EY) WRENCH

Characters:

BaBa Waters - female; hostess of the news program

Commercial Voice - female; lively, animated

Dr. Luther - male; distinguished; dressed in black robe

Husband - male, dressed in casual clothes

Wife - female, dressed in casual clothes

Props Needed:

Card table, 2 chairs, 2 mics on left in front of altar for BaBa and Dr. Luther

2 easy chairs for Husband and Wife; wireless mics for both; wine glasses for both; some papers to represent indulgences

Commercial Voice will speak from lectern; needs a hand held calculator

(as scene opens BaBa is seated at card table in front of altar)

BaBa: Good evening once again, ladies and gentlemen! And welcome to another edition of "6 Minutes or Thereabouts." I'm BaBa Waters. Again this week our special guest is going to be Dr. Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation and a man who stands tall in the history of the second millennium. Please stay tuned. We'll be right back.

(while BaBa is talking, Commercial Voice moves to lectern)

Commercial Voice: Hello friends! Do you ever find yourself wondering how much more you need to do in order to make yourself right with God? Are you having trouble keeping track of the good works you're doing and calculating their value on Heaven's scale? This is a problem that's common to many of us and now the fine folks at Amazing Church Products have come up with the solution! Introducing the "Good Works Calculator!" With this handy little device, which easily fits in pocket or purse, you will be able to record and keep track of every good work you do no matter how large or small it may be. Simply record the deed right here immediately after performing it and the Good Works Calculator will store it in its memory bank and keep track of it from that moment on! Never again will you have to worry about losing the value of a good work done! It will be recorded here for eternity! And, when you find yourself wondering how you're doing and where you stack up, just push the "how you're doing and where you stack up" button right here and the Good Works Calculator will immediately display the results. It will show you how many good works you've logged in to date, how many good works you have left to accomplish, and it will show you the good works per hour ratio you have to meet in order to get into Heaven when you die. Nothing could be easier! The Good Works Calculator from the fine folks at Amazing Church Products. Look for it in stores everywhere!

BaBa: Welcome back! As always, we are thrilled to hear from our sponsors and hope that you, our fine viewers out there in TV land, will support our sponsors and help to keep “6 Minutes or Thereabouts” coming to you live each week during this Lenten season. Now, let’s get on with our show for tonight. Again this week, we are very pleased to have with us in our studio, Dr. Martin Luther! *(Dr. Luther enters to applause and sits next to BaBa)* Good evening, Dr. Luther, we are delighted to have you back with us again this week!

Dr. Luther: Good evening, BaBa.

BaBa: Dr. Luther, before we get to our subject for tonight, let me ask you something. Are you finding it difficult to come back from the dead like this every week to do these interviews?

Dr. Luther: Well, no, BaBa, actually I’m not. I do wish, however, that I was coming back on Thursday nights every week instead of on Wednesdays.

BaBa: Oh? And why is that, Dr. Luther?

Dr. Luther: Because my favorite show is ER and I’ve missed a whole season of it! *(pleading and putting his hand on BaBa’s arm)* Tell me, please, what’s Dr. Carter doing these days?

BaBa: Ah we can talk about that after the show if you want to, Dr. Luther. *(removing Luther’s hand from her arm in disgust)* In the meantime, tonight I wanted to ask you about your dispute with the representative of the Church in Rome, Father John Tetzel. I understand that you and he had quite an argument going at one time!

Dr. Luther: Tetzel the Pretzel! That’s what I called him. And he was a pretzel, too, always twisting the Gospel message to fit his own needs.

BaBa: And what were those needs, Dr. Luther?

Dr. Luther: Well, you see, in those days the church hierarchy was building St. Peter’s Cathedral down there in Rome and they needed money. St. Peter’s was going to be the largest and biggest and most grandiose church on the face of the earth and it was costing millions! So, they devised this scheme of sending out preachers like Tetzel all over the Empire to sell what they called “indulgences” in order to raise the money they needed.

BaBa: And just what were these indulgences?

Dr. Luther: They were no more than worthless pieces of paper! But Tetzel and the

others preached and convinced a lot of people that if they bought one of these indulgences they could have their sins forgiven sooner and cut down the amount of time they would have to spend in Purgatory after they died. For a lot of people buying indulgences started to take the place of doing the good works the church required.

BaBa: Whoa! Slow down here, Dr. Luther, you're moving a little too fast for some of us. Purgatory? What was that?

Dr. Luther: Purgatory was the place where you went after you died! Or, at least, that's what Tetzal the Pretzel was teaching! The theory was that after you died you went to this place called Purgatory. It was sort of like a holding tank where you waited until God made up his mind about whether or not you were going to spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell. Nobody wanted to be there, of course, and nobody wanted to go to Hell either so the church provided a way out by selling indulgences. And the more money you spent on indulgences the better off you would be. For example, you could buy indulgences that were guaranteed to cut your time in Purgatory by 10 years or a hundred years or a thousand years and the more money you invested, of course, the sooner you could walk through those pearly gates and get out of Purgatory altogether and into Heaven itself. It was quite a scheme and a slick way to raise money for a building project.

BaBa: Hmmm, yes, I was just thinking that myself (*making notes on a piece of paper*). I think the members of our Building Committee are going to be very interested in this.

Dr. Luther: Well, don't let them get too interested. The whole thing was a pile of hooley! And I told them so, too. In fact, I threw quite a wrench in their works by drawing attention to the fact that nowhere in the Bible is a place called Purgatory ever mentioned and that a person got into Heaven, not because they bought a piece of paper saying they had a right to be there, but by putting their faith in what Christ had done for them on the cross. Remember our conversation from last week? "The righteous shall live by faith?" You do remember that, BaBa, don't you?

BaBa: Oh, yes, Dr. Luther, of course. But, you know, I was just thinking here (*still making notes on the paper before her*), if we could sell a thousand of those 10 year indulgences and a hundred of the hundred year ones and just 10 of the thousand year ones, we could pay for our new building in cash and still have money left over!

Dr. Luther: BaBa! BaBa! Are you listening to me? The whole thing was a hoax! Don't you get it? Let me tell you about a couple I knew back in Wittenberg.....

(Husband and Wife take their places in their easy chairs; each is holding a wine glass and both are very relaxed)

Husband: Ah, this is pretty nice, isn't it dear?

Wife: Yes, it certainly is. You know, honey, you were so smart to have sold that technology stock you had in Guttenberg Printing when it was at its highest price and buy these indulgences from the church instead. I think it's the smartest thing you've ever done - next to marrying me, of course.

Husband: Of course. *(they raise their glasses to each other in a toast)* Yes, these indulgences really were a good investment, much better than holding stock in Guttenberg Printing. I mean, where does he think that's going to lead anyway? He invented that printing press 50 years ago and he's gone nowhere with it. Most of the world can't read anyway so who does he think is gonna buy all those books? The guy's a dreamer!

Wife: I couldn't agree more. What would people do with a book anyway? Once you've read it you might just as well throw it away. But these indulgences *(she waves her papers)*, on the other hand, are worth their weight in gold. They've already saved me all kinds of time and trouble. For example, this morning when Pastor Wayne called and asked me if I would serve on one of the Ministries of the church for this year, I just told him I had a "get out of Hell free card" right here *(waving the papers again)* and I didn't need to do any more good works to get into Heaven.

Husband: Oh, I know what you mean, dear. Last Sunday he cornered me in the hallway outside the men's room and wanted to know if I was interested in being a Lay Reader or an Usher this year and I told him the same thing. "Don't have to do it," I said. "I've got me an indulgence and it guarantees me a place in Heaven whether I do any good works or not."

Wife: And what did he say to that?

Husband: He said, "Yeah, that's what everybody's been telling me since Pastor Tetzal came to town and started selling those things." I don't think he's too happy with that Tetzal guy being around here.

Wife: No, I'm sure he isn't. After all, if everybody buys an indulgence there won't be anybody left to do anything at the church.

Husband: Well, that's his problem, not mine. I'm just going to indulge myself with the good life here. Oh, say, did you hear that? I made a joke. I'm going to "indulge" myself! *(laughing)*

Wife: Yes, you did! And it was a good one, too, dear. Cheers! *(they toast each other)*

once again)

(scene moves back to BaBa Waters and Dr. Luther - Husband and Wife bow their heads and sit quietly in their chairs)

BaBa: That's a real interesting story, Dr. Luther, but I really don't see what that has to do with.....

Dr. Luther: *(interrupting BaBa)* It has everything to do with it, BaBa! Indulgences aren't real, you see! They're a hoax! You can't "buy" a piece of paper that will guarantee you a place in Heaven! Only God can do that! And the good news is that God has done it through what Christ has done for us on the cross! "The righteous shall live by faith!" That's what matters, BaBa! And that's all that matters!

BaBa: Well, then, what about the "good works" they *(pointing toward the Husband and Wife)* were talking about? Do we have to serve on a Ministry or be an Usher to get into Heaven?

Dr. Luther: Of course not! But don't tell Pastor Wayne I said that. We get into Heaven by God's grace when we put our faith and trust in what Jesus did for us on the cross.

BaBa: Well, then, why should I do anything for anybody?

Dr. Luther: We are called to do good works not in order to make ourselves loved by God and worthy of a place in Heaven, but because we are already loved by God and guaranteed a place in Heaven. Do you see the difference? We're not saved by good works. We're saved for good works.

BaBa: Yes, I do see it now. Our good works are really just a response to what God has already done for us. And this is the idea that you staked your life and the entire Protestant Reformation on?

Dr. Luther: Yes, it is, BaBa. When I came to understand what it means to say that "the righteous shall live by faith" I also came to understand how wrong the selling of indulgences was and I started to preach and teach against it with all my might. Needless to say, my preaching and teaching wasn't received very well in some circles and eventually I was thrown out of the church altogether because of it.

BaBa: Yes, we know about that, too, Dr. Luther, and, in fact, that's going to be the subject we want to talk with you about next week. *(turns to the audience)* So, be sure to tune in next Wednesday, folks, for another edition of "6 Minutes or Thereabouts." In the meantime, I'm BaBa Waters saying, "Good night and God bless!"

