



America's Heartland
Roger Alford
 RogerAlford1@GMail.Com

Four-legged chickens can be very difficult to catch

of the proprietor, Jerry Jones. Jerry went head to head with the likes of Tractor Supply, Rural King and Southern States, but ultimately he lost the fight. Now only a vacant building remains marking the place where great storytellers used to loaf.

Jerry is in the nursing home now, but he's still able to spin quite the yarn. I talk with him about once a week. He still seems to know everything about everybody, and he never runs out of tales. The closing of his feed store, in my opinion, was a huge loss to our community. It was, in a very real sense, an American institution.

You do realize that feed stores aren't the only such institutions closing these days. Churches are, too. Fewer people are going to church now. With attendance declining, financial resources are also dwindling, which means less money to support ministers or to care for aging church buildings. We have churches very near your homes that have fewer than a dozen people in regular attendance on Sunday mornings.

For the past year, I've been serving as pastor of a small rural church. Longtime members talk

about the good old days when all the pews were full of enthusiastic believers. I for one don't want to see our local churches go the route of the locally owned feed stores. And we, as believers, should be bent on making sure that doesn't happen.

In our rural community, only about 10 percent of the population attends church. Oddly enough, I am encouraged by that statistic, because it tells me there are literally thousands of people within an easy drive of our church who aren't attached to any other congregation and who could come and be a part of ours. These are people who could play a crucial role in saving a piece of Americana.

If you'd like to be a part of our efforts at South Fork, just give me a call or send me an email. My phone number and email address are included below. This is an opportunity to be a part of something truly remarkable, something of eternal value, and I hope you'll run as fast as a four-legged chicken to come help us.

Roger Alford is pastor of South Fork Baptist Church. Reach him at 502-514-6857 or rogeralford1@gmail.com.

One of my favorite stories ever is about the farmer who told his buddies at the feed store that he had developed a chicken with four legs.

"How do they taste?" one of his buddies asked.

"Well, I don't know," the farmer said. "We've not been able to catch one yet."

I do believe there's no better place in the country than the local feed store to hear stories so funny that they make you laugh out loud. Hangouts like that, with farmers sitting around on a rainy day catching up on the latest news, are pure Americana. The big chain stores have run many of them out of business. We lost ours a few years ago, despite the best efforts

Kitchen Diva by Angela Shelf Medearis Brussels Sprouts Shed Their Bad Reputation

Long before Brussels sprouts became a trendy vegetable, my family, especially, my daughter, Deanna, were huge fans. My mother was raised on a farm and loved to grow all types of green vegetables. She was especially skilled with properly preparing Brussels sprouts and other typically stinky and slimy vegetables -- I'm talking about you, cabbage and okra! While Brussels sprouts have only recently become popular in America, sprouts have been a culinary mainstay in the southern Netherlands and Northern Europe since the 1600s. They may have been grown in Belgium as early as 1200, and are named for Brussels, its capital.

These tiny members of the cabbage and mustard family also have cancer-fighting phytochemicals, are high in vitamin C and are a reliable source of folate, vitamin A and potassium. Since Brussels sprouts are so good for you, why do so many people despise them?

In a web poll taken several years ago, more than 78,000 adults weighed in on the foods they hate. Brussels sprouts finished No. 8 on the list of most hated foods. The comments section overflowed with horror stories about being forced to eat the vegetable as a child.

One thing I noticed about the readers' comments was that the Brussels sprouts they were served were muddy colored, overcooked and smelled bad. When Brussels sprouts are carefully selected, stored and cooked properly, they have a bright color, a crisp texture and a delicious flavor.

When selecting the vegetable, look for small, young, vibrant green, tightly compacted sprouts.

Brussels sprouts are delicious boiled or steamed until tender, but still slightly crisp or roasted to bring out their natural sugars. Use sprouts that are all about the same size to ensure they will cook quickly and evenly. As a rule, Brussels sprouts cook in about 6 to 7 minutes. Be careful not to overcook Brussels sprouts because they will release sinigrin, a natural gas with a sulfur-like smell.

This recipe for Hashed Brussels Sprouts is flavorful and delicious. The quick cooking time and the addition of the garlic, onion and mustard complement the sprouts and showcase its flavors in a unique way. Try it, and you're sure to become a Brussels sprouts lover, too!

HASHED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 medium purple onion, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable broth or low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon honey or sugar

1. Using a large bowl, pour in the lemon juice. Cut bottoms off the sprouts, and discard. Halve sprouts lengthwise. Thinly slice sprouts, cutting around and discarding the firm core. Immediately toss sprout slices with lemon juice to separate leaves and retain color.

2. Heat oil and butter over high heat in a skillet large enough to hold all the sprouts. When oil mixture is hot, but not smoking, add the sprouts, onion, garlic, Italian seasoning, and salt and pepper. Cook until sprouts begin to wilt, but leaves are still green and crisp, about 3 to 4 minutes. Some of the leaves might brown slightly.

3. Move the sprouts to one side of the pan and mix broth, mustard and honey or sugar together in the pan. Combine mixture with the sprouts and cook, stirring, 2 minutes more. Turn off heat, and stir in lemon zest, reserving a little to sprinkle on top of the dish. Transfer to serving bowl, sprinkle with remaining zest and serve. Serves 4.

(c) 2020 King Features Synd., Inc., and Angela



Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



Are You Listening?

Sunday, September 27th 2020 Morning Message
 Bro. Warren Rogers, Ivory Hill Baptist Church

The Lord Calls Samuel

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision. ²And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; ³And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; ⁴That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. ⁵And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. ⁶And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him. ⁸And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. ⁹Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

God's Judgment against Eli

¹⁰And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. ¹¹And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. ¹²Samuel 3:1-11

There is a Verizon commercial showing an employee going different places and asking, "Can you hear me now?" We know that cell phones have been notorious for losing reception. The commercial is trying to make a point -- no matter where you are, or how far you go -- Verizon is still available. Now I'm not promoting Verizon and I don't know about their commercial but one thing I do know, you cannot ever be out of reach of God.

Sometimes we as Christians get so far from God that we can't hear Him speak. We're still a part of His family but we have lost connection with Him. God has always wanted us to worship Him, but without listening we have a problem understanding what He has to say. A lot of times we think that God has to knock us down to get our attention or to speak audibly so we might hear.

"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it." ¹1 Corinthians 11:18

I find that this is a condition in a lot of churches. People smile but really they have hard feelings toward someone, over some silly thing that happened in the past. Friends you cannot be an effective Christian harboring bad thoughts about someone, especially a Christian brother or sister. It is easy to blame someone or something else but when we point our finger at someone, we've got three pointing back at us.

The problems at our church might be my preaching or my leadership. I am getting to be an old man and I don't have the energy or patience I used to have, but I pray daily for God to lead and use me for His glory. You pray for me and then ask Him if there is something you can do to help the church grow.

Have you had a reality check lately? Has God spoken to you and you did not realize it or you ignored it?

Are you listening? Seven times in Matthew, Mark and Luke it says, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." ¹Mark 4:23 & 7:17

Seven times in Revelations it says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." ¹Revelation 2:7, 11 & 17

"If any man have an ear, let him hear." ¹Revelation 13:9 "A wise man will hear." ¹Proverbs 1:5 "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not." ¹Proverbs 8:33

Friends, are you listening?

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. ⁷For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your heart." ¹Psalms 95:6,7 & 8

"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." ¹Luke 11:28

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." ¹John 10:27

Sometimes God speaks and we are not ready to listen.

Sometimes God speaks and we are not happy to listen.

Sometimes we have to listen before the Lord will speak.

My Friends, "Are you listening?"

Let us all learn to listen to God as often as He speaks.

Until next week, May God bless and keep you I can be reached at 606-481-0444.

Bro. Warren