

## Drenched in Hot Soup

The late Jerry Clower, an American stand-up comedian born and raised in the Southern United States, was best known for his stories of the rural South and earned the nickname *The Mouth of Mississippi*.

Born in Liberty, Mississippi, and a Navy veteran, he studied agriculture at Mississippi State University, where he played college football, then worked as a county agent and a seed and fertilizer salesman. Beginning in 1954, his career in comedy and as a recording artist took off, which led to him becoming a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1973.

In his book *Life Ever Laughter*, Clower tells a story about Christian love in action. Two Christian businessmen were having lunch in a downtown restaurant. The waitress serving their table accidentally dumped a bowl of hot soup right over one of the businessmen.

Everybody gasped and stared. As Clower tells it, “They just couldn’t wait for the manager to run out and fire this lady. They just couldn’t wait for this man, standing there, dripping, with his suit ruined, to cuss this waitress out, but the fellow looked at that waitress and said, ‘Young lady, I’m so sorry this happened to you. I know it embarrasses you.’”

How would you have handled that situation? Can you love as Jesus would have us love? Can any of us do that? How?

Christ said, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34 NIV).

If you took all the psychology texts, boiled them down to their essential truths and from that extensive effort sought to produce one statement about the character of humanity, it would be the most profound statement ever uttered; but you could not improve on this simple statement, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

The commandment to love is not merely a legalistic requirement. Rather, it is the natural response to the love we receive from Christ. That love is unconditional love.

“Just as I am without one plea,” we sing. When we understand that we are loved just as we are, with no strings attached, it can transform our lives.

– Beecher Hunter