

Salvation: What You Need to Know About the Most Important Decision of Your Life

How many people, do you think, like good news? Do you like good news? I think it's safe to say that everyone likes good news. But here's something I'd submit to you: sometimes people like good news so much that preachers only give good news. The problem is you can't really appreciate the good news until you get the bad news. The good news is never really as good until the bad news is understood. Who gets excited about a solution to a problem they don't recognize? I promise to get to the good news, but not before spending a good amount of time on the bad news, so you will really appreciate it when we get there.

THE BAD NEWS

The whole world is winding down. It's getting worse. It's twisted. It's broken. Romans 8:20 says that all of "*creation was subjected to futility*". The universe is in bondage to decay. All it can do is break down and fall apart and continue to get worse.

The problem: sin. Now, things weren't created this way. When God made Adam and Eve originally in the Garden of Eden, they were perfect. Creation was perfect. But when Adam and Eve chose to sin, it tore at the fabric of what God created them to be, and the effects of sin entered the world. Romans 5:12 says, "*Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*" We are born as sinful people, and we are sinful by birth, we are sinful by nature, we are sinful by actions. Every breaking of God's law, every violation of another person, every self-exalting, others-debasing, wounding action is because of sin. Every problem in our bodies, every physical problem that you and I have, every struggle that we have now or

will have in the future—all of it is because of sin.

The Bible says that “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). We have failed where we needed to succeed, and we have fallen where we were supposed to stand. And the result? Romans 6:23 says, “*the wages of sin is death*”. Had there been no sin, there would be no death.

Genesis 6:5 says, “*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*” Sin is a virus of the soul. It is gangrene of the heart. It is eating away at the fabric of your being and will do so until it consumes you. That is sin—a spiritual disease.

The prognosis: perish. John 3:16 says, “*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*” The least emphasized (and often overlooked) part of this verse is that whoever believes in Him “*should not perish.*” So then everyone who does not believe in Him will perish. Everyone. Perish means to suffer in hell and experience the just wrath of the Almighty God. “Perish” is an eternal death sentence.

So the bad news is that the problem is sin and the prognosis is perishing. And unless God had stepped in, nothing would alter that course. That’s the reality. So... ready for some good news?

THE GOOD NEWS

The provision: forgiveness. Even though the cost of sin is death, you and I can be forgiven of our sin. Forgiven. God is a forgiving God. There are passages throughout the Bible that speak of God’s forgiveness:

“For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you” (Psalm 86:5).

“Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity... He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love” (Micah

7:18).

“As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

God won't just take your sin away from you; He'll put it so far away you can't find it anymore. That's how forgiven you'll be. He's not going say, “Actually, I was thinking about that sin last night and I spoke a little too soon. Now I'm mad again.” God's not like that. He will put your sin so far away from you, you couldn't find it if you wanted to. He will totally forgive you. He will never bring it up again.

Let me ask you a question. Do you want to have all of that sin washed away? You're like, “That sounds like a pretty good deal, this forgiven by God thing. So, God's going to just say, ‘Oh, never mind, it's okay.’ and then wipe away my sin?” No. No. No. You do not understand the true gospel if you think that God is going to lightly dismiss sin. Sin is not a trifle—it is a terror. So, you have to get this next part.

The payment: Christ. This is the good news of the gospel. This is what separates biblical Christianity from all false religions of the world including aberrant Christianity itself. There are many false religions and one true one, one authored by God Himself. In all false religions, there is this thread: “I will do this myself. I will get there.” In every aberrant religion, you find people cutting themselves or doing penance or kissing rings and bowing down or making a journey to some sacred location, trying to do what God has already done for us in Christ.

Now, I'm here to tell you, the only way to have your sin forgiven is to throw your arms around this truth with your whole heart, with all that you have: the payment is Christ. God sent His perfect Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins. He died in our place. As our substitute, as the payment for the debt we owed to God because of our sin. Then three days later, Jesus rose from the dead, proving that God had accepted Christ's death on the cross as the payment for our sins. The Bible says, “In this is love, not that we

loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [payment] for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

THE CHOICE

Let me tell you, Hell is not deep enough to contain the wrath of God upon those who reject His only provision for your forgiveness. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). The outrage of God, the wrath of God that will never be satisfied will be poured upon those who reject Christ as the only way to Heaven. God offers you forgiveness freely, and if you say, “No, I’ll go my own way. I’ll find a way. I’ll get up there. I’ll convince you.” No, you will not.

But to those who believe what the Bible says, believe in what Christ did on the cross, trusting in Him alone for salvation, there is good news. “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

Now comes the choice. No one can do this for you. The most important decision of your life is to believe in Jesus Christ. Be reconciled to God through faith in Christ. It is your only hope.

If you accept the fact that you’re a sinner, if you believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sin, and if you want to confess Christ now, personally, just begin to pray that to Him. Pray this prayer from your heart:

Lord, I know that I’m a sinner. It’s not a piece of news to me. God, I know I’ve broken Your law, I know I’ve failed You. I know I’ve not been the person that You want me to be. I know that I deserve Your judgment. I’m not resisting that reality. I just want to know that I’m forgiven. I want to receive the gift of eternal life. Come into my life and forgive me. I choose God’s forgiveness. Forgive me, Lord Jesus. Come into my life and wash me and make me clean. Grant to me according to your mercy the gift of eternal life. Thank You. In Your Holy Name. Amen.

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