

In the beginning when God created all things, He created them “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31). He created the earth, the sun and the moon and the stars. He created all the animals, and the plants. He also created man in His own image and likeness, and made them male and female and put them within a perfect environment called the Garden of Eden. There He greatly provided for man and all his needs. God also created the angelic beings. They are spirits who serve Him. But one of these spirits rebelled against God and sought to usurp His authority and position from Him. His name was Lucifer who later became known as “*that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world*” (Revelation 12:9).

This fallen angel entered into God’s perfect environment that he had made for man and tempted man to disobey God. Satan is called the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), and he sought to bring mankind down to his level. God had given man some specific instructions that he might have the freedom to obey or disobey God. He did this because He loved man and created him a free moral agent, free to love God or reject His perfect love for him. True love can only be free and this He did to prove to man He did not make him a slave or a robot. So God set a tree in the midst of paradise “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” (Genesis 2:16-17)

When the serpent entered into this scene he came to the woman first and alleged that God was just a liar saying, “*Ye shall not surely die*” (Genesis 3:4). He told her that God did not want the best for her and her husband, but rather was keeping from them knowledge on how they too could become as gods. The serpent was very subtle and the sad result of their conversation ended with the woman deceived and eating that which she was commanded not to eat. She then took of this fruit and gave it to her husband and he ate also. Perhaps the man looked at Eve and saw that she did not die when she ate, so he too followed the Serpents lie and willfully chose not to believe God and disobeyed His command. But the fact of the matter is that when they sinned they died spiritually. Death means separation. This is what happens when a loved one dies, they are separated from you. And Adam and Eve were separated from communion with God.

The Bible tells us, “*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you*” (Isaiah 59:2), “*and your sins have withholden good things from you.*” (Jeremiah 5:25) The Bible tells us “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*” (Romans 5:12). “*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). We have all broken Gods holy commandments, which are “*just and good*” (Romans 7:12). The Bible says “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way*” (Isaiah 53:6). And “*there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.*” (Ecclesiastes 7:20) Therefore all are condemned to eternal separation from God in “*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matthew 25:41).

“*The wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). This is the bad news that we have all sinned and are therefore all condemned to die and to be separated from God for all eternity in the “*in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*” (Revelation 21:8). This indeed is terrible news that faces every man. We may avoid it all our life, but in the end death will have the victory over us.

But let me tell you this, that there is good news, there is light at the end of the tunnel so to say, but apart from understanding the bad news it would be difficult to even begin to understand or appreciate the Good News that the Bible also speaks of.

If we have recognized and acknowledged that we are a sinner, that is, one who has broken the commandment of God (1John 3:4), certainly it would be in our souls interest to ask the question, “Is there anything I can do to be saved?” There was a rich young ruler who asked this same question to Jesus saying, “*Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*” (Mark 10:17) He must have recognized his need, but before Jesus would answer his question he wanted to set the young man straight on one thing. He said, “*Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*” (Mark 10:18) Certainly, Jesus was good for He was God, and if we were to examine the record given to us when He walked this earth, we would see one “*who knew no sin*” (2Corinthians 5:21), “*who is holy, harmless, undefiled, [and] separate from sinners*” (Hebrews 7:26).

But then Jesus answered him saying, “*but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*” (Matthew 19:17) Many have sought eternal life this way and have become totally frustrated, but the young ruler thought he

had done a good job saying “*all these have I observed from my youth.*” But if he was truly honest with himself, I think he would have answered otherwise. So “*Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*” (Mark 10:21) Oh how he loves you and me, and he wants us to recognize our need. The man was lacking something and that was a relationship with God. There was something that was between him and God and that was his riches. Today that could be anything, but for this young ruler his riches were a stumbling block between him and God.

Today, is there anything that is keeping you from following Christ? Jesus told the young ruler to follow Him. Where was Jesus going? He was going to die for that man’s sins, and if he had followed Jesus he would have come to the foot of the cross and found redemption. But this man “*went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*” (Mark 10:22) His money could buy him anything but one thing, and that was eternal life. His money was keeping him from the Lord Jesus Christ. For you and me it might be something different. Riches are only one thing that may keep one from coming to the Lord Jesus. But today is there something keeping you from coming to Him?

Some believe they can get to heaven by keeping the Ten Commandments, but trying to come to God this way will keep them from Christ. If you are trying to come to heaven this way you will not make it. The Bible tells us “*whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*” (James 2:10) We were out boating one day on Lake Winnipeg and we stopped by a little island and thought we would scout it out. And when we got to shore we found a fisherman’s net washed up on shore that was full of dead fish and maggots. You could not believe the smell. Now if you were to pour a bottle of perfume over that pile of rotten fish, it would still smell like a rotten fish.

This is how God looks upon the unrepentant sinners good works, “*the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.*” (Isaiah 1:5-6) This is why the Bible tells us that “*we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isaiah 64:6). Our sins have defiled anything that we might do for God to be accepted of Him. This is why the Bible tells us “*Not by works of righteousness which*

we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5-6). Only the blood of Christ could wash away our sin (Revelation 1:5).

What then was the purpose of the law? It was to show us who we are, and that we have not measured up to God's perfect and holy standard. It was to teach us that there must be some other way to heaven, and there is. Therefore the Bible tells us *"the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."* (Galatians 3:24) The Bible tells us that God *"hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew not sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2Corinthians 5:21) We are admonished, *"be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God by faith"* (Philippians 3:9). Righteousness is a gift that is received through faith in Christ. It was only through the death of Christ that God *"might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* (Romans 3:26)

Through the death of Christ, the ungodly might now be declared righteous in a legal sense, not by any merit of their own, but entirely through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, when the sinner believes on Christ and trusts Him as his personal Lord and Savior. Salvation is entirely due to the grace of God, which is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). *"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."* (Romans 5:8-9) If we could do anything of our self to be saved Christ's death was in vain.

There was another man who asked the question *"what must I do to be saved?"* The apostle Paul's reply was *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"* (Acts 16:31). This man by simple faith believed God, and *"received"* (John 1:12-13) God's own beloved Son, Jesus Christ as his Savior and thereby became the recipient of eternal life. *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1John 5:12) The question is, Do you have the Son?

Have you yet received God's free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ? *"God ... now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30). Jesus said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* (Luke 13:3) You must repent, that is, change your mind and acknowledge that you are a sinner. *"There shall in no wise enter into*

[heaven] anything that defileth" (Revelation 21:27), and sin defiles. Your attitude towards God must change. He is *"the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy"* (Isaiah 57:15) He is the Just One, and will not tolerate sin. *"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"* (Habakkuk 1:13). If you will be saved you must come to God as a beggar with nothing to offer Him for your salvation. Church membership, baptism, good works will avail for you nothing. The problem is sin.

While we may think that we need many things in this world, may God open our eyes to see our greatest need this day, that is, salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. The *"glorious gospel of the blessed God"* (1Timothy 1:11) is that Jesus *"his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"* (1Peter 2:24). He was *"smitten of God, and afflicted . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* (Isaiah 53:4-5)

"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is the best news, and if you believe it you will be saved. Paul said *"it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching . . . Jesus Christ, and him crucified . . . to save them that believe"* (1Corinthians 1:18, 21, 23, 2:2), so he would testify, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth"* (Romans 1:16).

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are assured that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that our sin debt was paid in full. *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* (Hebrews 7:25) Will you call upon Him today? We are promised, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:13). God cannot lie. *"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins."* (Acts 10:43) *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

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Glad Tidings of Great Joy Await You

I want to tell you about a book, it is a very old book, it has always maintained the number one position on the best sellers list, and has sold more copies than any other book. It has also been translated into more languages than any other book known. The Book is called the Bible. This Book speaks for itself and tells us many things. It tells us about world history right from the beginning of creation and even stretches into the future far beyond our generation. It has proved to be infallible concerning past history, and therefore leaves us no reason to doubt what it says about the future.

In it we have given to us *"all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2Peter 1:3). It reveals to us who we are, and why we exist, and where we came from. It also reveals to us who God is along with His very nature. The Bible also tells us where it came from. *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* (2Peter 1:21) The Bible tells us that God spoke to mankind in times past through the prophets but *"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"* (Heb. 1:1-3). So we are told, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God"* (2Tim. 3:16), which would include both the Old and the New Testaments.

The Bible also tells us news that is exceedingly great, so great it is called *"good tidings of great joy"* (Luke 2:10). In fact the Bible says *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Romans 10:15) Now one cannot imagine how the feet of a preacher that may have trodden many dusty miles, and by that time may be very dirty and smelly could be beautiful, but they are beautiful because the Bible says they are beautiful, because they bring the greatest commodity the world can ever know, *"the glorious gospel of Christ"* (2Corinthians 4:4).

But the Bible also tells us about some bad news. In fact, it is the most terrible news the world can ever know, and it affects every individual whom has ever walked the earth. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we do not hide the facts from you, but share with you this bad news first. One of the reasons we will share the bad news first, is that we do not believe one can fully appreciate the good news without first hearing the bad news.