



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#199)
Looking to the future.

Salvation and all it entails...

What God has done for us goes *far beyond* anything we humans could have ever imagined.

He has revealed some of those things to us...

"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are **the things God has revealed to us** by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9b-10a (NIV)

THE CONTEXT IS VERSE 6+. PAUL IS REFERRING TO THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION.

↳ There is *so much more* that he hasn't revealed — things we look forward to discovering in eternity!

But these FUTURE things are reserved for those who love him NOW.

We have looked at this wonderful gift called "salvation."

↳ *What it is, how to recognize it, the difference between the gift and the world's counterfeits, the consequences of receiving it, etc.*

WHY? BECAUSE:

- ✓ It's a life-and-death matter.
- ✓ The world is so full of counterfeits.

★ **Mistakes in this matter are eternally devastating.** ★

Now that we have been exposed to the truth, the only issue that remains is whether or not we are putting it to practice.

We have learned about...

- ✓ **Various background issues.**
 1. The need to **communicate** the Good News *accurately*.
 2. Its **FACT-foundation**; why the Bible is *needed*.
 3. **God's role** in salvation; **our responsibility** to live for Jesus and to communicate the Good News.
 4. The need for **prayer**, the role of the **Holy Spirit** (and the Spirit's priorities); the possibility of **persecution**.
- ✓ **The "process" of salvation** — what happens, the results, etc.
 - ↳ We used the following chart to illustrate these things.

THE "PROCESS OF SALVATION":

God's actions ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ What GOD does in salvation.

#1 Conviction ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ The foundation that makes it possible.

↓

#2 Change ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ Internal changes WE do. External changes WE do.

↓

#3 Consequences ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ What comes afterwards.

There is so much more we could have looked at.

- ➔ **The Bible is so rich in truth**, that we will *never* reach the point where we know it all.
- ➔ **Since we have avoided ...**
 - ✓ Half truth (which always results in half lie).
 - ✓ Adding to / subtracting from what Scripture says.

Anything else we might learn would NOT lead us in a different direction, to a *different* "good news."

To help avoid these errors, we introduced the "Basic Bible Study Method," when we looked at the concept of "salvation."

A BASIC METHOD FOR UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE.

⇒ This is a basic and valuable starting point for studying the Bible. (To illustrate it, we used the "save/salvation" concept.)

We need to pay attention to:

- ① The words and their meanings.
- ② How those words connect.
- ③ The context of the passage.
- ④ What other passages say.

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The Good News changes people!

- **It changes us NOW!**
 - ↳ People with these changes can look forward to the changes that will occur in eternity. They are ready for the judgment day; and for whatever will come after that.
- **It will change us in the FUTURE!**
 - ↳ Scripture tells us a little about the future (compared to the amount we would like to know).
 - ↳ Most of what is going to happen is reserved for us to find out later – like a present, or a surprise waiting for us.

↳ **BUT THERE ARE SOME ETERNAL CHANGES WE DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR!** For instance, if we love God, ETERNAL LIFE BEGINS NOW – not after our physical death!

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Our focus has been on the "NOW" aspect of salvation.

- ➔ Without this, we will experience NO "FUTURE" aspect of it.
- ➔ Scripture also has this emphasis on the "NOW."

THE SAME GRACE THAT SAVES PEOPLE... For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

TEACHES SAVED PEOPLE HOW TO LIVE NOW... It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE FUTURE TO COME! while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ...

Titus 2:11–13 (NIV)

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If we love God, there is so much in store for us... Now and forever!

LATER, AND OFTEN NOW! And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

LATER! Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12 (NIV)

SOME ASPECTS NOW; SOME LATER! Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

James 2:5 (NIV)

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Made possible by a God-initiated change!

- The fact that we are capable of loving God – the true God – is really amazing! It was originally our nature to hate him and to love fakes!

★ **BUT GOD TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND LOVED US!**

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ... We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:10, 19 (NIV)

Like the rest, we were by nature children of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved!

Ephesians 2:3a-5 (BSB)

(See also Titus 3:3-5.)

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What did WE do?

What happened on our level of existence?

- At some point in our past, WE STARTED PAYING ATTENTION TO GOD'S WORD. And God used its power to change us!

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (BSB)

[God] chose to give us birth through the word of truth, ...

James 1:18a (BSB)

For you have been born again ... through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23 (BSB)

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God used his Word to *change* us!

- God made us into "new creations," with new natures, able to put on the "new self" that has the *desire* and *ability* to do his will.

THE CHANGE BEGUN and CONTINUED

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (BSB)

Yes, it is God who is **working in you**. He **helps you** want to do what pleases him, and **he gives you** the power to do it.
Philippians 2:13 (ERV)

- He changes our hearts and minds, as we "renew" our thinking – as we grow in our understanding of God's Word.

FOR ONGOING CHANGE

Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.
Romans 12:2 (BSB)

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God's Word has been like SEED in our hearts.

Because of God's work in us...

- ☞ We don't have to be like those who never pay attention to the Word of God!
- ☞ We don't have to be like those who seem to follow the Bible in good times, but abandon it when things get rough.
- ☞ We don't have to be like those who *claim* to follow it, but who's hearts are still in love with what the world offers.

INSTEAD...


- ☞ We can be like those who have noble hearts, who *live* by the Word, and *don't* have wasted lives!

➔ **HOW can we respond? It's illustrated by "The Parable of the Sower."** ⇄⇄

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The Parable of the Sower *
(Found in Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8)

"A farmer went out to sow some seed..."



★ THE SEED = God's Word ★
★ THE GROUND = people ★

* [SOWER = someone who plants (or "sows") seeds.]

NOT THIS WAY!

The Parable

"Some of the seed fell on the path. The birds came and ate it up."

IF THE SEED HAD GOTTEN IN, THE BIRDS WOULDN'T HAVE EATEN IT!

GOOD SEED... BAD SOIL!


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The People

"When they have heard, the devil comes and takes away the word that was sown. They do not believe and become saved."

YOU CAN'T BLAME THE BIRDS!



NOT THIS WAY!

The Parable

"Some fell among the rocks, where there was little soil. It quickly sprang up, but the sun scorched it, and it withered away."

IT LOOKED GOOD FOR A WHILE!

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The People

"They receive the word with joy. They believe for a while; but when trials come, they fall away."

THE SEED COULDN'T SURVIVE IN SUCH SHALLOWNESS!

NOT THIS WAY!

The Parable

"Some fell among the weeds, which grew up and choked the plants."

WHAT A WASTE OF GOOD SEED!

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The People

"They hear the word; but the cares and pleasures of life choke the word. They remain fruitless."

THEY PREFERRED TO GROW OTHER THINGS!

YES THIS WAY!

The Parable

"Some fell on good ground, grew and became fruitful."

G O O D
S O I L

The People

"They hear the word; they accept it, live by it, and have fruitful lives."

We have ALL sinned terribly.

But there's good news for those who accept the GOOD NEWS!

- Jesus has paid 100% of the penalty for 100% of our sin – **AND HE DID NOT PAY IN VAIN!**
 - ✓ Now, all that's left is his *unchanging* love.
 - ✓ Nothing can successfully attack our salvation!
- Now, God is for us... so nothing can (successfully) be against us.
 - ✓ The devil can try... but cannot succeed. Jesus' love for us is *greater* than any barrier the devil can try to erect.
 - ✓ **With JOY we can say...**

Since God is for us, it doesn't matter who is against us. They can't prevail!

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

NO accusations can stick. They've been dealt with, and God has now declared us *righteous!*

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?

It is God who justifies.

We can't be condemned. Jesus – the judge – has already *paid our penalty!*

Who then is the one who condemns?

No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Romans 8:31b-34 (NIV)

It's *his* love for *us* (not ours for him) that will prevent *anything* from getting between him and us!

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39 (NIV)

★ VICTORY through Christ! ★

Following Jesus is like a RACE, and like a BATTLE.

➔ **The RACE** – unlike earthly competition, *we can ALL win!*

KEEP FOCUSED! Avoid distractions!

... let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us **run with perseverance the race** marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1b-2a (NIV); see also 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

- The devil may scream out, "You can't win!" But we no longer have to be his slaves. We don't have to be slaves to sin!

For we know that our old self was crucified with [Christ] so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should **no longer be slaves to sin ...**

Romans 6:6 (NIV)

- If (when) we trip and fall, we don't have to give up! The apostle Paul gives us an example of how we can respond...

➔ • **HOW TO RESPOND:** When we fall down in sin (since we haven't reached perfection), we don't have to fear the devil's accusations. We can just get up and continue our pursuit of God's kingdom.

I don't mean that I am exactly what God wants me to be. **I have not yet reached that goal.**

But I continue trying to reach it and make it mine. That's what Christ Jesus wants me to do. It is the reason he made me his.

Brothers and sisters, I know that **I still have a long way to go.** But there is one thing I do: **I forget what is in the past and try as hard as I can to reach the goal before me.**

I keep running hard toward the finish line to get the prize that is mine because God has called me through Christ Jesus to life up there in heaven.*

Philippians 3:12-14 (ERV)

* (In the end, though, we will be on the *new earth* – Revelation 21 & 22.)

➔ **The BATTLE** – Understand your enemy and fight *God's* way!

Your **real** enemy is NOT people!

- It's the *devil* and the *spiritual forces of darkness* that we fight.

Our **fight** is not against people on earth. We are **fighting** against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness. We are **fighting** against the **spiritual powers of evil** in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12 (ERV)

- We MUST **fight** them... *but we must do it God's way.*

Fight the good **fight** of the faith.

1 Timothy 6:12a (NIV)

The weapons we **fight** with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV)

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God has given us our "**fighting gear**" and open "**communication lines**," so we can fight and have victory!

Therefore, put on every piece of **God's armor** so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Stand your ground, putting on the **belt** of truth and the **body armor** of God's righteousness.

For **shoes**, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

In addition to all of these, hold up the **shield** of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

Put on salvation as your **helmet**, and take the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

Ephesians 6:13–18 (NLT)

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In the end, VICTORY is GUARANTEED!

- Someday, we will be able to say (like Paul did) ...

I have fought **the good fight**, I have finished **the race**, I have kept the faith.

Now there is in store for me **the crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to **all who have longed for his appearing**.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV)

We have a wonderful *future* to look forward to!

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OUR MISSION

(This is the last "mission" in this study about the Good News. If we have paid attention to the previous missions, we can *victoriously* fulfil this one!!)



REJOICE in the GOOD NEWS and how it has changed us!



REJOICE in the GOD of the GOOD NEWS!

✓ We are members of *God's* family!

✓ We have the opportunity to share the Good News with others, in hopes that *they* too will join our family – a family that will last forever!

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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- Parable of the Sower – A paraphrase based on all three accounts (in Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8).

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