



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#75)
 Good News – "People Facts"
 and our thoughts, actions, conscience.

GOOD NEWS FACTS!

WE HAVE LOOKED AT:

- Facts about GOD and JESUS.
- ISSUES related to God's kingdom, obedience, and the New Covenant (we could call them "God-People Facts").

WHAT'S NEXT? →

- PEOPLE Facts.

Things pertaining to values, perspective, how to live (as a saved person); etc.

⇒ Our focus: Mainly on what we find in the book of Acts. (More can be found in the rest of the Bible.)

GOD

JESUS

ISSUES (KG & NC)

PEOPLE

THE GOOD NEWS REQUIRES US TO HAVE A NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE. THIS REQUIRES A RENEWED MIND.

- A renewed mind is the only way we can know (and do) God's will.

Do not be conformed to this present world, but be transformed by **the renewing of your mind**, so that you may test and approve what is the will of God—what is good and well-pleasing and perfect.

Romans 12:2 (NET)
- The Good News FACTS must influence our thoughts and actions. Otherwise, we are just like these people:

... people [who] will not tolerate accurate teaching; but following after their own desires, they will surround themselves with teachers who will tell them anything their itching ears want to hear.

2 Timothy 4:3 (DHT)

1 THE GOOD NEWS FACTS WILL INFLUENCE OUR OUTLOOK ON THE FUTURE: 1

FACT #1 ⇒ GOD WILL BRING BOTH RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED PEOPLE BACK TO LIFE... AND ALL PEOPLE WILL BE JUDGED.

This fact can bring warning or encouragement; fear or rejoicing... all depending on our response to the Good News. (It can also result in persecution by those who hate the truth.)

The UNSAVED – those who don't repent – have a good reason to be fearful... But they shouldn't remain unrepentant, as Felix apparently did (Acts 24:25-27).

[Paul] spoke about ... the judgment to come, [and] Felix became afraid...

Acts 24:25 (CSB)

Today's FAKE "good news" often downplays this FACT about judgment.

GOD'S PEOPLE can look forward to this future event... even if the required life-changes result in persecution.

THIS FACT POINTS TO OUR FUTURE HOPE!

And now I stand on trial because of **the hope** in what God promised to our ancestors, the promise our twelve tribes hope to reach as they earnestly serve him night and day.

King Agrippa, I am being accused by the Jews because of **this hope**. Why do any of you consider it incredible **that God raises the dead?**

Acts 26:6-8 (CSB)

Then Paul [said], "I stand on trial because of **my hope in the resurrection of the dead.**"

Acts 23:6b (NIV)

Unsaved people may believe in a "resurrection" ... but it doesn't have a godly affect on the way they live. [Example: Some of Paul's persecutors.]

This "future fact" will influence the way righteous people live now.

FUTURE

NOW

I have hope in God... that he will raise both the righteous and the ungodly.

Because of this, I always try to **maintain a clear conscience** before God and everyone else.

Acts 24:15-16 (NLT)

Note that this "future fact" about **people** has parallels to certain facts about **Jesus** – the one who has already been raised from the dead, and who is the future judge.

For [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man [=Jesus] he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

Acts 17:31 (NIV)

2

THE GOOD NEWS FACTS WILL INFLUENCE OUR OUTLOOK AT THE PRESENT TIME.

2

FACT #2 ⇒ OUR LIVES MUST BE CHARACTERIZED BY GODLY LIVING

Considering the fact that God embeds his laws in our hearts (Hebrews 8:10), and gives us the desire and ability to obey him (Philip. 2:13), *NOT having this focus is a contradiction to being saved!*

[Paul] spoke about righteousness, self-control...

Acts 24:25a (CSB)

* TWO ASPECTS OF THIS GODLY LIVING * (MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS)

(Much more can be learned in the rest of the Bible.)

1) We need to obey GOD, not PEOPLE (when the two contradict).

[They] answered, "We must obey God rather than people."

Acts 5:29 (GW); see also Acts 4:19.

TO DO THIS CORRECTLY...

- **We need to know Scripture**, in order to know for certain that it's actually God we're obeying (and not human opinions). *Otherwise, we could end up being like these people:*

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.

Titus 1:16a (NIV)

- **We need the Spirit's power** to obey him the right way. **EXAMPLE:**

... they raised their voices together in prayer to God. ... After they prayed, ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 4:24b, 31 (NIV)

2) We may have to endure trials and persecution, caused by those who oppose God's ways.

- "Following Jesus" is normally associated with trials.

{ Jesus said so (John 16:33), the apostles said so.
Only the FAKE "good news" would say otherwise! }

[Paul and Barnabas] ... strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, "It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

Acts 14:22 (CSB)

- The God who saves us will also empower us.

"And now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified."

Acts 20:32 (CSB)

THE GOOD NEWS FACTS (AND COMMANDS) PREPARE PEOPLE FOR LIVING IN A WAY THAT DOES NOT GO AGAINST CONSCIENCE.

This refers only to a conscience that is influenced by the Word of God; not to one that is distorted or deadened by the world's influences.

- Paul shows us an example of living with a good conscience – one that is "alive and well."

"Brothers, I have always lived before God in all good **conscience!**"

Acts 23:1b (NLT)

- Even the "future facts" accomplish this. **EXAMPLE:** Since Paul was aware of the coming resurrection and judgment, he said...

"... I strive always to keep my **conscience** clear before God and man."

Acts 24:16 (NIV)

CAUTION!!! Conscience is NOT a perfect guide.

What is "Conscience"?

An internal awareness of right and wrong. It judges the thoughts, actions and motives of one's self or of others (when applicable).

- God embeds within people an awareness of the moral law. "Conscience" compares those laws to one's thoughts and actions. *Even people who don't know the Bible have this awareness.*

Even when Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that *in their hearts they know right from wrong*. They demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own **consciences** either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right.

Romans 2:14-15 (NLT)

What makes "Conscience" imperfect?

- The sinful nature causes conscience to be defective. It can...
 - Become calloused and insensitive ("seared") – 1 Timothy 4:2.
 - Be morally defiled – Titus 1:15.
 - Encourage the pursuit of "dead works" – Hebrews 9:14b.

- People's minds can become so corrupt that they think evil is good and good is evil.

AS JESUS WARNED: Certainly, the time is coming when people who murder you will think that they are serving God.

John 16:2b (GW)

PAUL'S LIFE ILLUSTRATES THIS...



PAUL'S LIFE EXAMPLE:

- **BEFORE (= Very religious, but NOT following Jesus.)** – Paul thought it was good – pleasing to God – to persecute and kill Christians!

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Galatians 1:13-14 (NIV) [See also: Acts 26:9-11]

- **TRANSITION (= The effect of the Good News)** – God changed Paul.

[God] set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, ...

Galatians 1:15a (NIV)

- **AFTER (= A life changed by Jesus.)** – The effect of this change was:

[People] heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 1:23-24 (NIV)

God must transform the conscience, before it can function the way God intended it to function.

(The Spirit uses the Bible to accomplish this.)

- With **spiritual maturity**, our conscience can become fairly reliable... but we can't guarantee it will be 100% reliable.

AS PAUL SAID:

My **conscience** is clear, but that isn't what matters. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

1 Cor. 4:4 (NLT)

A "**spiritual newborn**" (someone who has just begun following Jesus, who hasn't yet had much exposure to the Bible) may have a "weak" conscience – 1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12.

- We need to encourage such people to grow ... and not wound their conscience while we are waiting for the growth to occur!

- OUR GOAL is to develop a "good" or "clean" conscience:
 - **The conscience itself** needs to be controlled by the Bible. This is the only way it can be strengthened in the truth, so that it can evaluate things accurately.
 - **Our thoughts and actions** need to be righteous, so that the conscience can express approval (rather than condemnation).

THIS REQUIRES A RENEWED MIND AND SUBMISSION TO GOD:

WE NEED TO KNOW GOD'S WILL.

... we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Col. 1:9b (NIV)

THIS IS MADE POSSIBLE WHEN GOD'S LAWS INFLUENCE OUR HEART AND MIND – AND THE NEW COVENANT DOES JUST THAT:

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

Hebrews 8:10b (NIV)

- The **OLD Covenant** could not accomplish this. (It had a different purpose.)

... gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in **conscience**, ...

Hebrews 9:9b (NASB)

[Otherwise,] the sacrifices would have stopped long ago. Those who worship would have been cleansed once and for all. Their **consciences** would have been free from sin.

Hebrews 10:2b (GW)

- But under the **NEW Covenant** Jesus accomplishes it!

... the blood of Christ [will] purify our **consciences** from dead works to worship the living God.

Hebrews 9:14b (NET)

... having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil **conscience**...

Hebrews 10:22b (NASB)

Life changes associated with a transformed conscience.

- The right type of conscience is associated with having a God-focus and living according to the Bible!

TRUST (IN GOD).

... having faith and a good **conscience**...

1 Timothy 1:19b (CSB)

ACCEPTING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS.

They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear **conscience**.

1 Tim. 3:9 (NIV)

TRUTHFULNESS.

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my **conscience** confirms it in the Holy Spirit—

Romans 9:1 (NIV)

LOVE.

... love, which comes from a pure heart and a good **conscience** and a sincere faith.

1 Tim. 1:5b (NIV)

SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES:

- We will be able to serve God the right way.

... God, whom I serve with a clear **conscience** as my ancestors did, ...

2 Timothy 1:3a (CSB)

- We will interact with others in a holy and sincere manner.

Now this is our boast: Our **conscience** testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

2 Cor. 1:12 (NIV)

- We will be willing to submit to authorities.

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of **conscience**.

Romans 13:5 (NIV)

UNLESS THEY GO AGAINST SCRIPTURE.

- We will want to live in an honorable way.

Pray for us. We are sure that our consciences are clear because we want to live honorably in every way.

Hebrews 13:18 (GW)

- We will try to live in a way that enables others who have God-influenced consciences to express approval of our conduct.

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Cor. 4:2 (NIV)

Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

2 Cor. 5:11 (NIV)

- We will be willing to be patient when persecuted.

For God is pleased with you when, for the sake of your conscience, you patiently endure unfair treatment.

1 Peter 2:19 (NLT)

- It will influence the way we talk about the confident hope that the Good News gives us.

... always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess. Yet do it with courtesy and respect, keeping a good conscience, so that those who slander your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame when they accuse you.

1 Peter 3:15b-16 (NET)

★ **THIS IS THE TYPE OF CONSCIENCE WE NEED!** ★

THIS WEEK'S MISSION:

**LET THE GOOD NEWS FACTS
ACCOMPLISH THEIR PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE!**

If you do...

You will be developing: ➡ ➡ ➡

- ✓ A good conscience that is pleasing to God, and
- ✓ A life that benefits all those around you!

Credits

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