

Bad News and Good News

Sunday, August 12th, 1990

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I'm sure you are familiar with the stories, which begin with this phrase: “I have bad news and good news.” This is the title of my message today: **“Bad News and Good News.”** I want you to turn with me to the Book of Romans Chapter 6: verse 23. Here is the bad news and the good news.

Paul says here, in the Book of Romans Chapter 6:23, the bad news; *“The wages of sin is death* and the good news, *“But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* This is bad news and good news.

Man will not hear the good news until he has first heard the bad news. A man will not be interested in the good news until he knows the extent of the bad news. After a man has heard, really heard, in his heart, the good news, he will no longer fear the bad news. Did you hear me? Did you hear what I said? I said, a man will not hear the good news until he has first heard the bad news. A man will not be interested in the gift of God until he knows the extent of the wages of sin.

After one has heard, really heard in his heart and in his soul, that good news, *“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,”* he will never any longer fear the bad news. The scripture says, *“There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Well, let's dwell on those two things for a little while. What is the bad news and what is the good news? First of all, the bad news: *“The wages of sin is death. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”* I don't like to dwell on the bad news. I don't like to dwell on unpleasant things. If we are going to be honest with our congregations and we are going to be honest with our hearers, we are going to have to preach the bad news. Whether we like it or not, it is true; *“The wages of sin is death.”* Whether we like it or not, it is true; *“The wages of sin is death.”*

Let me give you seven things. I believe it will be helpful to you if you to write these things down and study them. Listen to them, these seven things that have to do with this bad news.

The first one is this; there is an eternal, Holy God, and Almighty, Eternal, Holy God that I cannot satisfy. I cannot please this God and that's right. There is no way that I can please this Holy God. The scripture says that, it says; *"In the flesh, no man can please God."* The scripture says, *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (and the pleasure of God). He dwells in a light to which no man can approach."*

This is what God said to Israel when He gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The people were all out there in the thunder and the lightning and the smoke. The glory of God filled the mountains. God said to the people, "Don't come near the mountain; stay away." You cannot please this God.

When you view that tabernacle in the wilderness, there is the Holy of Holies in which God dwelt. No man was allowed to come into that Holy of Holies. You had to stay out. Only the High Priest was allowed in once a year and then, not without blood. So, there is a Holy God, and eternal, Almighty, Eternal, and Holy God that I cannot please. That is bad news!

Secondly, I want you to get this: There is a Holy law that I cannot keep. Paul wrote this in Galatians. He said, *"Tell me, you that would be under the law, do you not hear the law?"* Would you be under the law of God? Would you seek to obey the law of God? Do you hear the law of God? The Holy law of God requires what you cannot produce and what you cannot keep. The Holy law of God requires absolute, unchangeable, perfect obedience. This is required inwardly and outwardly.

There is a law that I cannot keep. This law demands what you and I don't have. First, it demands the holy birth, it demands a holy love, it demands a sinless heart, and it condemns even a thought, contrary to perfection. That is bad news! There is a law that I cannot keep. There is a holy, immaculate, infinite God that I cannot please. There is a law given by that God impossible for me to keep. That is bad news!

Thirdly: All the way through the Bible it talks about "righteous" and "righteousness." There is righteousness and holiness required which I cannot produce. I know a lot of people are trying it. That is what Paul says in Roman 10, *"They are ignorant of God's righteousness (holiness) and are going about to establish their own righteousness."* Our Lord said, in Matthew 5:20; *"I say unto you, (talking to His disciples, His chosen twelve), except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of God."*

You have to have righteousness far better and far greater than the best righteousness that any man can produce. There is a righteousness required and this is the very Holiness of

God Himself, which is required of all men. Deuteronomy 10:12 asks this; *“What doth the Lord God require of thee?”* Have you ever read this scripture? This scripture is pretty plain isn't it? This is a very good question; *“What does the Lord God require of thee?”* Can you answer that?

I can answer that. The scripture says, *“But to fear the Lord thy God.”* You have to fear Him in a reverence, in awe, worship, and subjection. You are to *“Fear the Lord thy God; and walk in all His ways.”* I'm not talking about the ones you approve of, but the ones that you can keep. *“Love Him with all your heart. Serve the Lord thy God with all your heart and with all your soul.”* This is a pretty tall order isn't it? There is no way that you can do it, absolutely no way! There's a righteousness that I cannot produce and that is bad news.

God cannot compromise His law. He cannot compromise His Holiness. He cannot accept anything inferior. To be accepted, the Word of God says; *“It must be perfect.”* Under that rule, nothing good you have ever done has been accepted. The reason is because it is not perfect.

Fourthly: This is bad news; there is a love that I cannot give. There is a lot of talk about love. I hear people talk about it all the time; I hear them talk about love. I will tell you this, the love which God requires; no man knows anything about it. There is no man, no woman, no boy or girl that has at all, the love which God requires. Not even a smidgen of it!

This love requires loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Do you know anything about that? This love requires you to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Do you know anything about that? This love requires you to love your enemies. *“Love them that hate you and them that despise you and say all manner of evil against you.”* Do what? Am I supposed to tolerate them, or pity them? No sir; love them! You are to love as God loves. You are to lay down your life for your enemies. That is the love that is required and you and I cannot give. That is bad news! God can't accept anything less.

Fifthly: This is bad news; but it won't change. There is a sin that I cannot get rid of. That's right! We are sinners. We didn't use to be sinners but we are sinners now. I'm talking about the unbelieving sinners and believing sinners, saved sinners, unsaved sinners, white sinners, and black sinners, young sinners and old sinners. Everybody in this world born from Adam of the human race, right now, as of this moment, is a sinner! If anybody says that he has no sin, *“He is a liar and the truth is not in him. He makes God a liar.”*

There is a sin that we cannot get rid of. *“There’s none good, no not one; none righteous, no not one. There’s none that seeketh after God. There’s none that understandeth.”* There’s none. *“Man at his best state is altogether vanity.”* Sin dominates your thoughts, dominates your dreams, dominates your words and dominates your acts in the flesh. Sin is as much a part of you as your blood. Sin is born in us, dwells in us and we can’t get rid of it.

Repentance won’t put away sin. You can be sorry all you want to. Baptism won’t put away sin, walking a church isle won’t put away sin, shaking a preacher’s hand won’t put away sin, a profession of faith won’t put away sin. God must and will punish sin and that is bad news because we have plenty of it.

Sin keeps on adding up. The mountain keeps getting higher and higher and the ditch keeps getting deeper and deeper. The picture keeps getting blacker and blacker. *“The wages of sin is death. And sin, when it is finished, is going to bring forth death.”* That is bad news!

In the sixth place: There is a judgment. There is an awesome, awful, judgment that we cannot endure. *“It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this, judgment.”* Every man shall stand at the judgment seat of Christ. There will be small and great, rich and poor, old and young that shall stand before God. *“And we will be judged out of those things written in God’s Books.”* I’m talking about God’s Book and your book.

There is God’s Book of the law, God’s Book of the truth, and God’s Book of Holiness, and your book, which is an ugly book, and my book, which is an ugly book. *“God is going to judge this world by that man Jesus Christ.”* This will do nothing but add to our condemnation if we do not know Him. That is bad news!

Now, here is the seventh thing: This is bad news and like I said, I hate to dwell on the bad news but it has to be preached. We have to face the truth. There is a condemnation that I cannot escape. *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* That is the condemnation that I am talking about. I have sinned and I have to die. *“The soul that sinneth shall surely die.”* God Almighty said that and He hasn’t changed yet.

Everyone is going to spend eternity somewhere; it is either going to be in His presence or separated from His presence. That’s right! So, I will tell you this, this is bad news! There is a God that I cannot please; there is a law that I cannot keep; there is a righteousness that I cannot produce; and there is a love that I cannot give.

There is a sin that I cannot get rid of and a judgment that I fear and don't want to face; because, I cannot endure it. My record won't stand the searchlight of God Almighty's piercing, sovereign eye. There is a condemnation that if I stand in that judgment; I cannot escape. You don't have any reason to doubt what I am saying. This is true. The Word of God is too plain on this subject. *"The wages of sin is death."* That is bad news!

But, here is the good news! I told you that the title of this message is, "Bad news and good news." Well, I have some good news. You see; this is what the gospel is all about. The word gospel is good news. The gospel relates to these things that make up the bad news. This is what the angel said to the shepherds on the Judean hillside. They said, *"We bring you good news; we bring you glad tidings of great joy. Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour."*

This is someone who can do something about the bad news. This is someone who can do something about the predicament in which we have been born into and now live. We will die if He doesn't do something about it. In First Timothy 1:15, it says; *"This is a faithful saying, a sure saying and worthy of all acceptance by all, that Jesus Christ (the God-man) came to save sinners."* He came into this world, the Lord of glory, and took upon Himself human flesh to do for us what we couldn't do. He came to do for us what is required. He came to do for us what is demanded. He came to do for us what we cannot effect ourselves and that is to save us from our sins.

"By one man's disobedience we became sinners. By another man's obedience we became righteous." That is bad news and good news. *"As in Adam all die;"* that is bad news. *"In Christ we are made alive;"* that is good news. *"We have born the image of the earthy;"* that is bad news. *"We shall bear the image of the heavenly;"* that is good news!

Let's take these seven things that I gave you and let's see how we are going to cope with these things. There is a God I cannot please. *"In the flesh, no man can please God."* But, Christ pleased Him. I'm talking about Christ, the man, my Representative. The Father spake from heaven and said, *"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."* Christ Himself said this, *"I always do those things that please My Father."*

He became a man, born of a woman. In all that He did, in all that He thought and in all that He said, actually, and completely pleased the Father. Let me tell you now, He is my Representative and I dwell in Him. He didn't do that for Himself because He had no sin. If He did that for me, and I am one of those somebody's that pleased the Father, then in Him, I please God. Do you understand? He pleased the Father.

Secondly, what did I say? There is a law that I cannot keep. He kept it. Listen, *“In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were born under the law.”* All that the law required, all the law demanded of you and me, Christ fulfilled it. Yes, He did! I’ll give you an example:

What is the one word that is given two or three times in the scripture as being the fulfillment of the law? What does the scripture say? All the law is fulfilled in this one word, *“Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself.”* He did! *“Greater love hath no man than this, that He lay down his life for his friends.”* You might be saying, “Did He love His enemies?” He loved them more than Himself. *“Father forgive them; they know not what they do.”* There is a law that I cannot keep, but a law that He kept.

Thirdly: There is a righteousness that I cannot produce. There is Holiness, an immaculate, infinite, God-honoring Holiness and Righteousness and He produced it. His righteousness and obedience was perfect! *“By one man’s sin, by the disobedience of that man, we were made sinners. So, by the obedience of Christ, we were made righteous.”*

Even His enemies could find no fault in Him. In Romans 10:4, it says; *“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe.”* In Second Corinthians 5:21, it says; *“He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* Romans 1:16 says, *“I’m not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.”* Jeremiah called Him, *“The Lord our righteousness.”* There is a righteousness that I cannot produce, but He did.

Do you know how I know that the Heavenly Father was totally pleased with His righteousness? He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His right hand. He is seated at the right-hand of the Majesty on High.

Fourthly: There is a love that I cannot give, but He did. Jesus Christ, in the flesh, as a man, loved so perfectly that He could say to His disciples, *“You love one another as I loved you.”* This is something you cannot say, never have been able, or will ever be able to say. He is saying that He is the example of love; I’m the perfect pattern. You love like I love. That is perfect love.

His perfect love was two-fold. He loved His Father. He prayed, *“Not My will, but Thy will be done.”* He loved His own disciples. *“Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.”* Paul wrote this, *“You let this mind, (this spirit, this attitude), be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Yet, made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the habit of a servant and was made in*

the likeness of men and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” That is His love! His love is a perfect, everlasting, infinite, unchanging, and infallible, love. I can’t produce it. My friend, my Substitute did and my Lord did.

Fifthly: What was that next word that I used? I said that there is a certain sin that I cannot get rid of. This sin stains, and it mars everything that I do. Sin is mixed with all that I do and all that you do. How can sin be put away? The Jewish sacrifices wouldn’t put away sin; the Bible says that. The Bible says, *“the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin.”* Baptism cannot take away sin, repentance cannot take away sin and death won’t take away sin. The reason is that after men die; they meet their sins at the judgment. Hell won’t take away sin. We can spend eternity separated from God and it won’t put sin away. We are still there. *“Let him that is filthy be filthy still. Let him that is unholy be unholy still.”*

Well, preacher, how can sin be put away? I’m going to tell you how sin can be put away from you as far as the east is from the west. The scripture says that they will be put away, *“In the depths of the sea to be remembered no more.”* They will be blotted out and cancelled. Here it is in Hebrews 9:26, *“He, (Christ) put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”* It says in Hebrews 1: *“Having by Himself purged our sins; He sat down on the right hand of God. The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s son, cleanseth us from all sin.”* That is one way that sin can be put away.

It takes the blood of Christ and the death of Christ. It takes the sacrifice of the Son of God. There is one way that sin can be cancelled. There is one way that sin can be blotted out. There is one way that sin can be covered as a mercy seat of old, covering the broken law and that is through the blood of Christ. *“By one sacrifice, He perfected forever, them that are sanctified.”* God says, *“Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”*

I can’t put it away. I can pray until my knees wear out. You can make professions and join churches. One preacher said one time, “You can be baptized so many times that the frogs knows my middle name.” This won’t put away sin. *“His blood maketh atonement for sin.”* God said, *“When I see the blood; I will pass over you.”*

Here is the last one. There is a judgment that I cannot endure. I don’t want to stand there. I don’t want to be there. I don’t want to be one of those who is charged with offending a Holy God. What are they going to do? Well, I’ll tell you; *“He was taken from prison and from judgment. He was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of My people was He stricken. There is therefore, now, no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus the Lord.”*

Do you know of anything that is as good news as that is? There are no transgressions, no condemnation and no judgment. That's right! *"There is therefore, now, no judgment to them who are in Christ Jesus."*

Paul challenged heaven, earth and hell. He said, *"Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus."* He said, *"Look unto Me and be ye saved. I am God and there is none else."* Job wrote this, *"Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom."*

Have you heard the bad news? Have you really heard the bad news? Have you really given it any thought? Are you accountable for sin? You are a sinner. Are you accountable? You may say, "Yes, to my mother or to my father or preacher?" No, you are accountable to God. David said that, He said; *"Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned."* Have you heard the bad news? *"God is angry with the wicked. God by no means will clear the guilty. The soul that sinneth shall surely die. The wages of sin is death."* Have you heard the bad news? If you've ever heard the bad news, you'll be glad to hear this, *"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*