Dig Deeper Devotional

Real Good News: The Grace We Could Never Earn

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you that Jesus Christ has come to save sinners. Give us the humility to recognize the seriousness of our sin, the faith to receive the gift of Your grace, and the gratitude to live in the freedom of Your forgiveness. Help us understand the depth of the bad news so that we may treasure the good news all the more. Let the truth of the gospel move beyond our understanding and transform our hearts, our priorities, and the way we treat others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Foundation

Romans 5:8 (NIV)

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (KJV)

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Teaching & Insight

News we encounter each day seems designed to make us worry, anger or divide people. Headlines emphasize conflict, crime, economic uncertainty, political division, and the possibility of what might go wrong. Bad news often captures our attention because it touches our fears, threatens our sense of security, and leaves us wondering what will happen next. Even when we cannot influence the events being reported, we can find ourselves carrying their weight throughout the day.

There is a reason negative stories so often dominate our attention. We instinctively notice threats, and news organizations compete for the limited attention of their audiences. Constant exposure to alarming information can gradually shape the way we see the world. We may begin to believe that the worst things happening around us are the only things worth noticing. Anxiety becomes familiar, hope feels naïve, and peace seems possible only when circumstances finally improve.

The answer is not to ignore reality or pretend that suffering does not exist. Christians are not called to close their eyes to the brokenness of the world. We are called to see that brokenness truthfully while remembering that it does not tell the whole story. The events dominating today's headlines are not the final authority over tomorrow, and the troubles of this life cannot overturn the promises of God.

What makes news genuinely good? Good news is not only what makes us feel better. Good news is good because it announces true positive changes to our situation. The Christian gospel announces the most consequential news humanity could ever receive: God has acted through Jesus Christ to rescue sinners and reconcile them to Himself. That announcement is so familiar to many Christians that its astonishing nature can become obscured. We may hear the word *gospel* so often that we forget what it means. We sing about grace, repeat familiar verses, and attend church without pausing to consider the magnitude of what God has done. The gospel is the declaration that, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has provided the way of salvation that we could never provide for ourselves.

We cannot fully appreciate the good news until we understand the problem it addresses. Scripture does not begin by telling humanity that we are fundamentally good people who occasionally need a little assistance. We were created by God, in His image, for relationship with Him and sin has corrupted our relationship with our Creator. Sin damaged our relationships with one another and affected every dimension of human life.

Romans 3:23 states, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” The word *all* leaves no room for the comfortable assumption that sin is small or primarily someone else's problem. We may differ in our backgrounds, experiences, opportunities, and outward behavior, but none of us can claim to have lived in perfect faithfulness to God. Sin is more than an occasional mistake or a regrettable lapse in judgment. It includes the attitudes, desires, words, and actions through which we turn from God's will and place ourselves at the center of our lives. We fail to measure our lives against the holiness of God. There is a place for such a sinner, and it is death apart from the Lord God in hell.

The problem is not that we occasionally fall short of an otherwise attainable standard of perfection. The problem is that our sin leaves us unable to repair our relationship with God through our own moral effort. Romans 6:23 makes the consequences clear: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (KJV). Sin earns a wage, and that wage is death. Scripture speaks not only of physical death but also of the spiritual separation from God that sin brings. The Bible's teaching about final judgment and hell is serious because rebellion against the holy God is serious.

The bad news is not meant to leave us hopeless. It is meant to awaken us to our need. A person who believes there is no disease has little reason to seek a cure. A person who denies being lost sees no need for rescue. In the same way, when we minimize sin, we diminish our understanding of salvation. If our only problem is that we need to become slightly more disciplined, a little more religious, or somewhat kinder, then the cross may appear unnecessary. When we understand that sin separates us from God and that we cannot save ourselves, the sacrifice of Jesus becomes the center of our hope.

One of the most beautiful turns in Scripture appears in Romans 5:8: “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Those two words, *but God*, change everything. The gospel does not announce that humanity finally improved enough to deserve divine attention. It announces that God acted in love while we were still sinners. Jesus died for sinners. God's love moved toward us in our need to be saved.

This does not mean God treats sin as unimportant. The cross reveals both the seriousness of sin and the astonishing depth of divine love. If sin were insignificant, there would be no need for such a sacrifice. If God were indifferent to us, He would not have provided it. At Calvary, we see that God does not ignore the evil that separates us from Him; in Christ, He provides the means of our reconciliation. Jesus willingly bears the cost of redemption, and His resurrection declares that sin and death will not have the final word. John 3:16 captures this divine initiative: God loved the world and gave His Son so that those who believe in Him may have eternal life.

The invitation of the gospel extends beyond the people we consider deserving, respectable, or likely to respond. It reaches the ashamed, the proud, the wounded, the rebellious, and the weary. No one can purchase God's love, and no one who comes to Christ must first manufacture a record of perfection. We must receive His grace. We should receive it with humility, recognizing that the same grace we need is the grace we are called to proclaim to others.

Grace is God's undeserved favor toward sinners, demonstrated supremely through Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is costly because sin is real, but the cost has been paid by Christ rather than earned by us. This is why the cross must remain central to Christian faith. Our hope does not rest on the strength of our promises to God, but on the faithfulness of the Savior who gave Himself for us.

The final encouragement in the Good News is that when we encounter bad news, we should remember that its troubles are temporary, while the good news of Jesus is eternal. This does not mean every earthly hardship will disappear quickly, or that Christians are promised freedom from grief, injustice, illness, or loss in this life. Scripture never asks us to pretend that suffering is painless. Rather, it teaches us to view our present circumstances in light of God's eternal promises.

The gospel should therefore change the way we respond to bad news. We can remain informed without allowing every alarming report to govern our hearts. We can grieve with those who suffer, pray for those in danger, serve our neighbors, and work for what is good without imagining that the future rests entirely on our shoulders. We can acknowledge what we cannot control while faithfully addressing what God has placed within our reach. Most importantly, the good news must change the way we live. If we have received mercy, we should become people who extend mercy. If we have been forgiven, we should resist the impulse to define others permanently by their worst failures. If our salvation is a gift, we should approach people with humility rather than superiority. If Christ has reconciled us to God, our lives should increasingly display the love, truth, patience, and hope that belong to His kingdom.

We share the Good News because we know we need the same Savior they need. We do not proclaim grace as spectators observing the world's brokenness from a position of moral superiority. We proclaim it as recipients of a mercy we could never earn. The message is not that Christians have made themselves worthy of heaven. It is that Jesus Christ saves sinners, and He invites all who trust in Him to receive the life God freely gives.

The world has no shortage of bad news. What it desperately needs is the real good news—not a shallow optimism that ignores sin, nor a fearful religion that forgets grace, but the full gospel of Jesus Christ. We were lost, but God acted. We were guilty, but Christ died for us. We could not earn salvation, but God offers it as a gift. Jesus was crucified, Jesus was raised, and all who trust in Him may live in the hope of eternal life. That is news worth remembering, celebrating, and sharing.

DEED / ACTION

Let the Gospel Shape Your Week

D — Discover the truth. Read Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, and Ephesians 2:8–10 slowly. Notice the movement to sin's consequences, to God's loving initiative, and finally to the new life that grace produces. Ask God to help you see both the seriousness of sin and the greater sufficiency of Christ.

E — Examine your response. Consider whether you have been living as though acceptance must be earned. Are you relying on religious activity, moral comparison, or personal accomplishments to establish your worth? Confess any attempt to make yourself comparable to others, and rest again in the grace God has provided through Jesus.

E — Express gratitude. Each day this week, name one specific reason you are thankful for the gospel. Let your gratitude move beyond words into action. Extend patience to someone who frustrates you, offer forgiveness where appropriate, or serve someone without seeking recognition. Let the grace you have received become visible in the grace you give.

D — Deliver the good news. Pray for one person who needs to understand the hope of Jesus Christ. Look for a natural opportunity to share what the gospel means to you. You do not need to have an answer to every question or deliver a polished speech. Speak honestly about your need for grace, the Savior who met that need, and the hope you have found in Him.

Pause & Reflect

1. What kinds of bad news most often capture your attention and influence your peace? How might remembering the eternal promises of God change your response?
2. Why is it important to understand the seriousness of sin before we can fully appreciate the good news of salvation?
3. Have you ever treated church attendance, service, generosity, or moral behavior as a way to earn acceptance? What changes when you understand that good works are the fruit of grace rather than the price of salvation?
4. Who might God be inviting you to encourage with the real good news of Jesus this week?

Hebrew Insight

בְּשׂוֹרָה — *Besorah*: News, tidings, or a message of good news

The Hebrew word *besorah* refers to news or tidings, and its meaning depends on the context in which it appears. In the Old Testament, news could announce an event of great importance, including victory or deliverance. The idea helps us recognize that news is more than information; it tells us that something has happened that matters.

Greek Insight

εὐαγγέλιον — *Euangelion*: Good news, gospel, or joyful proclamation

The Greek word *euangelion* is the New Testament term commonly translated “evangelical” or “gospel.” It describes the good news proclaimed by Jesus and His followers. At the heart of that message is God's saving work through Jesus Christ—His death for sinners, His resurrection, and the invitation to receive salvation through faith. The gospel is both an announcement to believe and a truth that reshapes the life of the believer. Having received grace, we are called to walk in the new life God gives us. The same message that brings us forgiveness also gives us a new identity, a new hope, and a new reason to live. We proclaim the gospel not because we have perfected ourselves, but because Jesus Christ is a sufficient Savior.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the truth about our sin without leaving us without hope. We confess that we have fallen short of Your glory and cannot earn our way into Your presence. Thank You that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Thank You for salvation as Your gift of grace, received through faith. Give us opportunities to share the hope of Christ. Please give us the wisdom to do so with both truth and love. Let our lives bear witness to the grace we have received, so that others may see not our superiority, but the goodness of our Savior. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

Final Charge

The world will continue to deliver bad news, and some of it will be painful, frightening, and beyond your control. Do not deny reality, but do not let temporary troubles become the foundation of your hope. Remember the truth of the gospel: all have sinned, Christ died for sinners, salvation is God's gift of grace, and Jesus Christ is risen. Receive that good news with faith, live it with gratitude, and share it with humility. The greatest news has already been proclaimed. Let it change your life—and let your life help others see the hope of Jesus.

Sources

- The Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV).
- The Holy Bible, King James Version (KJV).
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.
- Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon.
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.
- Mondays With Mark Video Series — LifeMark Ministries.