

## **Share the Victory**

The single most foundational truth of the Christian faith is what the Bible refers to as the gospel; that is the good news of Jesus Christ. It is quite possibly the most overlooked part of our relationship to God, or lack thereof, yet is absolutely the most essential aspect of knowing and connecting with Him.

Without the good news of Jesus the Bible has no validity. Without the good news of Jesus our faith is worthless. Without the good news of Jesus we have absolutely no hope of ever entering God's kingdom, learning His ways, knowing Him, going to heaven, or enjoying the life God intends for us to have. (1 Corinthians 15:12-28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12).

However, with the gospel we have legal access to the things of God. It is through the good news of Jesus Christ that we can know, love, serve, obey and worship God. It is through the gospel that we are forgiven, enter the kingdom, receive a place in heaven, and enjoy the life that God has intended us to live; full of His presence, grace, truth, and love. It is through the gospel, only through the gospel, that we can become children of the Most High God. (John 1:9-13; John 3:1-36).

But what is the gospel? What is this truth that is so foundational that it must not be overlooked? The gospel is this: That every one of us, myself included, has offended God by actions, thoughts, and words that have not reflected Him in our lives. Because we have offended God we stand separated from Him forever. There is nothing you, or I, or anyone else can do to earn his own way into heaven. We cannot be good enough to earn God's love or forgiveness. (Romans 3:23, Galatians 2:20)

This is where the good news comes in; we don't have to! Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, lived the perfect life that we couldn't live, died the death we should have died on the cross in our place and for our sins, and rose again from the dead 3 days later to return us to Himself. The good news is that if we rethink the way we live our lives, and place our faith and trust in Jesus death, burial, and resurrection He brings us to God because of His sacrifice. When we trust in Him, He then changes us to be like Him as He provides for us what we need to know God and obediently serve Him in action, thought, and word. That's the good news of Jesus, that He does the work for us, and it changes our lives and eternities when we depend on what He's already done! (Titus 3:1-7, Romans 6:23)

Now, in case this is a little difficult to understand, let's break it down another way. Picture a high school athlete wanting to play a college sport. That athlete can do all that they want to work really hard to earn a scholarship and still get past up because their skills weren't good enough. A high school athlete can also be the best athlete in the nation and still get past up by a college coach simply because their character and attitude are terrible.

Ask any college coach, and they'll tell you they've had to pass up players who could have been good. The reality becomes that it doesn't depend so much on how good an athlete is, all athletes are lacking in one area or another, but it depends on what the team needs and why the coach decides he wants to recruit a player. It depends not on the athlete, but on the coach. The coach chooses to offer the athlete a spot on the team because of what the coach desires in an athlete, not because of what the athlete has in and of himself. The athlete then has the choice to respond by accepting the offer and wearing the colors of the team or he chooses not to. Once on the team, there are then guidelines set in place to help the athlete grow. Violating those guidelines results in discipline, but usually not elimination from the team.

See the picture? God is recruiting us to Himself. He extends to us His offer to be on His team by the sacrifice of His Son Jesus. If we accept the offer, Jesus then gives us the colors of the cross to wear so that God identifies us as part of His team. If we refuse, we do not receive the colors of the cross and do not become a member of God's team. Once a member of the team, God disciplines and trains us, just like a good coach disciplines and trains His players, so that we can learn to play and live like a member of God's team. Accepting the offer takes but a moment. Learning to play the game God's way takes a life time. That's the gospel. That's the journey. That is the victory we have in Jesus; that He has won the day, and that in Christ we can share that victory! We must preach this, teach this, understand this, believe this, share this and live this. For all of God's play book (the Bible) points us back to this beautiful truth, that God is recruiting us to His team through faith in Jesus Christ and then training us to play the game (life) the way He wants us to as we learn the ways of His victorious team. Accept the offer, receive the training, share the victory! (1 Corinthians 15:56)



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