

Here/There—Good News

Have you noticed how much news has been in the news? A few years ago we started hearing about fake news. Fake news isn't really new. It has been around a long time. Spin and propaganda are as old as human civilization. It's just that the internet allows it to spread like an out of control grass fire.

Some of the most shared fake news stories online last year were these headlines.

- Lottery winner arrested for dumping \$200,000 of manure on ex-boss's lawn.
- Donald Trump ends school shootings by banning schools.
- Two altar boys were arrested for putting weed in the censer-burner.

Then there is breaking news. Have you noticed how every time you turn on a news channel, there's a caption on the screen that says "Breaking News." We've got the inside scoop on some new, huge story...stay tuned. You know it's just a ploy by the news networks to keep you watching through the commercial break.

Have you noticed, though, how often the "breaking news" is. . . underwhelming?



Of course, part of the problem is that now we have 24-7 news. When you have umpteen 24 hour news channel, you have to do something to keep viewer's eyes glued to the screen. You thrive on controversy. You have to have outrage. You need drama.

Social media has now brought us instant news. Stories break Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook long before network cameras ever show up. Everyone's a journalist. Did you know that almost 65% of us now get our news primarily from social media sites?

Remember, when you just had the nightly news? 30 minutes of news a day was enough, and we were happier then. How about some good news?

- Billionaire investor and philanthropist Robert J. Smith announced to the graduating class of Morehouse College that he would pay off the student debt of all 396 graduating seniors.
- Michael Watson a sophomore at McKinley High School in Canton, OH weighed 335 pounds. He resolved to make a change by walking to school. He walked 20 minutes to and from school rain or shine and two years later he's lost 115 pounds.
- Two Florida teens, Tyler Smith and Heather Brown decided to go for a swim. The ocean current pulled them out to sea. They prayed for rescue, and soon a boat approached from nowhere. The name of the boat – "Amen."

We could all use some good news. The apostle Peter also talks about some good news several times in his letter. I want to look at a couple of mentions early on. In 1 Peter 1:12, he writes,

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Maybe your translation says “gospel” there. That’s what gospel means– “good news.” The gospel of Jesus is the good news of Jesus. Down in vs. 24 and 25 of chapter 1 Peter writes this,

*“All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
but the word of the Lord remains forever.”
And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

In both of these passages he says we have received good news. If you are a Christian, somebody told you the good news about Jesus. Who told you about Jesus? How did they tell you?

Someone told you the good news about Jesus. A parent, a friend, a preacher, a child. Someone told you the good news. And one of the most awesome things you can ever do in your life is tell someone else the good news of Jesus. When you tell someone the good news of Jesus and they hear it, and they believe it and it changes their life, it is one of the most incredible things you can ever be a part of.

One of the best ways to tell people about Jesus is to just tell them the story of what Jesus has done for you. Tell them how the good news has changed you. It’s not enough just to receive the good news. We want to pass it on. Here at Son-Rise, we want everyone here to do three things:

1. Be involved in helping us tell others good news.
2. Be invested in helping us tell others good news.
3. Be committed to inviting others to come and hear good news.

Think about who wrote this letter. It’s the apostle Peter. The speak-first-think-later, big-mouthed disciple who made bold claims and then fell flat on his face. That guy. This is Peter who failed Jesus in his darkest hour, denying three times he even knew Jesus. But Jesus loved Peter even in Peter’s darkest hour. Peter had given up hope. Peter had gone back to the fishing boats he’d known before he followed Jesus.

And it was there on the shores of Galilee where Jesus first called Peter that a resurrected Jesus restored Peter. Three times Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Three times Peter said, “Yes, Lord, you know I love you.” Three times Jesus again called him to ministry. “Feed my sheep, Peter.” Jesus did not reject Peter. Did not turn his back on Peter, and did not leave him to wallow in his failure. And so Peter was one of the first to see and hear and receive the good news of a risen Savior.

And that’s how Peter became the first person to share the good news about Jesus. In Acts 2, he preaches the very first sermon in the history of Christianity and shares the good news of Jesus

for the very first time. And we can learn a lot about the good news by just looking at what Peter had to say in that very first sermon.

If you're here this morning and you're not sure what the good news is...maybe you've never heard the good news, you're about to hear it. Let me tell you the good news of Jesus through the words of Peter.

Peter had a lot to say, but we want to jump in on some of the most crucial points:

Acts 2:22 **The Power of God in the Flesh**

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—

Jesus was the Son of God who came with divine power. He gave sight to the blind. He made the lame walk again. He calmed the stormy seas. He cast out demons, and he raised the dead. He had power and authority over both the natural world and the spirit world. He had power over life and death.

He was no two-bit street corner hustler. He was almighty God come as one of us. He didn't just walk in our shoes. He lived in our skin. His miracles were witnessed by friend and foe alike, and challenged by no one. Even his enemies acknowledged his power. That's who Jesus is, and that's good news. Because a weak Savior wouldn't do. A powerless Savior couldn't help you.

Do you believe it? Do you believe that Jesus did miracles, mighty works and signs and wonders? Do you believe He was God come in human flesh?

Peter goes on in Acts 2:23, **Jesus Gave Up His Life for Us**

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Jesus didn't die on accident. He was caught up in circumstances beyond his control. The gospels are very clear that Jesus went to Jerusalem intentionally knowing what would happen to him there. He even prophesied beforehand that he would die, and how he would die. It was all a part of God's plan. Jesus gave himself up for us. Ultimately, his death was not merely a murder, not an assassination, nor was it martyrdom. It was a sacrifice. And that is good news.

It's good news, because it's the death we deserved. It's good news because he died in our place. It's good news because he paid our price.

Do you believe it? Do you believe that Jesus was crucified and died for you?

Acts 2:24 **Jesus Rose from the Dead**

24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

It wouldn't be good news, though, if Jesus stayed dead. It wouldn't be good news if the grave was the end of the story, but that isn't where the story ends. An almighty Lord who has power over both life and death. A Savior who didn't deserve to die. Such a Lord and Savior couldn't stay dead. The tomb couldn't keep him in. Death could not contain him.

The earth trembled and shook. The stone rolled away, and the tomb gave up what it could not hold. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is alive! That's good news!

Do you believe it? Do you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? This is why we have hope beyond the grave.

Acts 2:36 **Jesus is Lord of All**

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Christ is not Jesus' last name. It's certainly not an exclamation to be sworn when you or someone else does something stupid. It's a title. It comes from the Greek word Christos and it means anointed. The Greek word in turn comes from a Hebrew word in the Old Testament – Messiah which also means anointed. Anointed means chosen. It refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne.

Jesus is no longer a carpenter in Nazareth. He's no longer an itinerant teacher around the Sea of Galilee or the mountains of Judea. The Bible teaches that he shares the throne with God Father. He sits at the Father's right hand sharing all power and authority. That's why he's anointed.

That's why He is Lord. Lord simply means master. He is the Lord of all. One day, every soul that has ever existed will bow down before Jesus and acknowledge him for who He really is.

This is a big deal, and it's good news. You see. It wouldn't do us any good if Peter died in our place. It wouldn't do us any good if John the air conditioner repairman died in our place. It wouldn't do us any good if Donald Trump, Bill Gates, or Warren Buffet died in our place. But when the Lord of all the universe, the chosen one, the anointed one dies in your place, that's good news indeed!

Do you believe it? Do you believe that Jesus is both Lord and Christ?

Listen to how Peter's sermon ends. Acts 2:37-41: **Repent and Be Baptized**

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

If you've never responded to the good news about Jesus Christ, I want to encourage you to do so today. Jesus doesn't want to be your Lord. He wants to be your Savior too. He will be your Lord, no matter what you think about him. He will be your Lord. It doesn't matter whether you believe in him or not. You will someday. But to be your Savior you must decide some things about Jesus now. To be your Savior, you must believe in Jesus now. Don't wait until it's too late to bow your knee. Don't bow your knee in the future out of fear. Bow your knee now out of love and out of faith.

The way you respond to Jesus today, is the same way Peter told this crowd 2,000 years ago. First, you repent. Repent is simply a change of direction. It is to turn away from sin. And then Peter says be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Baptism is a picture of a death and a burial and a resurrection. The old you is laid to rest when you go down into the water which symbolized the cleansing blood of Jesus who died in your place. A new you rises to walk in the newness of life. Not to follow in the old ways of sin, but to follow Jesus.

Peter promises that your sins will be forgiven. Every failure erased. Every mistake paid for. Every lie you've ever told. Every venomous word of hatred that's ever crossed your lips. All the damage done from every outburst of anger. Every moment of surrender to every enticement of lust. Every time you given up control to any addiction that's every chained you. Every time greed has stolen your appreciation and enjoyment of what you already have. Every time jealousy and envy has poisoned a relationship and broken friends apart. Every time. It's undone. It's paid for. It's wiped clean. The guilt is gone. Every. Single. Time.

But Jesus doesn't just change your past. He rewrites your future. Peter says He also gives you the gift of His Holy Spirit. His Spirit enters your life to help change you from the inside out. He help you think new thoughts, dream new dreams, serve with new gifts, and do what you could never do before.

That's good news! Do you believe it? And if you believe it, but you haven't done it, then today needs to be the day. Recognize Him as Lord. Receive Him as Savior. Be buried with him in baptism, and leave every sin in your life in his grave, so you can be raised up to live His life, knowing that you will live with him forever.

Let me also say this to those of you who have already been baptized into Christ. If you've never shared the good news about Jesus Christ, I want to encourage you to do so today.

I also want to challenge you in another way... Be good news. Our actions can speak louder than words. Sometimes our actions undo any good news we might speak.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. – 1 Peter 3:15

You see, we need to live the kind of life that makes them want to ask. And then we need to be prepared to give them an answer. We need to be prepared with the good news. I want you to seriously accept the challenge to tell someone the good news about Jesus this week, but I also want to challenge you to be the good news of Jesus this week. Live it.