

## **Good News!—The Good News of Rescue**

March 22, 2020

Good morning! Welcome, Faith Covenant Church! If you're new to us I'm Brad Kindall, the lead pastor.

What I want to focus on this month is simple ways to share good news with the people in your life. Or maybe the idea of Christianity being good news is new to you. What's are some simple ways to understand why it's good news. Last week we talked about...**Do vs. Done.**

Religion is spelled D-O. DO! Do this. Do that. Stand up. Sit down. Recycle. Be kind to puppies. Do everything you can to get in with God's good graces, and maybe just maybe God will let you in to his eternal kingdom. That doesn't seem like good news because how can you know you've ever done enough? Christianity isn't really spelled D-O. It's spelled D-O-N-E. God knew we could never do enough to earn our way into eternal life with Him, so He sent His Son to do what we could never do for ourselves—pay for our sins. We don't have to do, do, do, because Christ has done it for us. This doesn't mean we aren't called to be obedient to the ways of Christ. The ways of Christ are the best way to be human. But we follow and are obedient to Christ out of love, rather than some sort of righteousness balance test God is weighing out for us.

[**Good News!**]

This week I would like to give you another helpful tool to share good news. But before we go any further, let's pray.

(Pray)

This'll be quite fun. Let's pretend you and I are hanging out together. And let's say, we're talking about coronavirus. Topical conversation these days! And let's say we start talking about our fears. What are we afraid of these days?

- Getting sick
- Our loved ones getting sick
- Fundamentally we don't die.

The fear of death is normal for human beings, right? But let's say I ask you, ***“What do you think about life after death? What do you think happens?”***

So what if I asked you, “OK, who gets in on life after death? Who gets to go to heaven?”

Almost every person I've known answers: “Good people get to go to heaven.”

So we continue talking and maybe I say, “Okay, so let's think this through logically. Let me draw something for you. You know I'm a Christian. Let me show you how this works out according to Christianity. (And what I'm going to show you now is something you can draw on a piece of paper, on a napkin, even on your phone. Just draw a ladder.)

So we both want to get in on eternal life. If God is love and life in Him goes on forever in perfect love, let's get in on that! So at top of the ladder is God—all powerful, all loving, eternally good.

Ladder Slide with God at the top.

Now, you have said good people get to get in on the eternal life. Thus, it would seem logical that not so good in people would not get in on heaven.

Now, you might say at this point all people should get in on eternal life. So then a common response might be, "Well, what about serial killers, and terrorists? Do you think they should get in on heaven?"

"Well, no, that wouldn't seem right." Or maybe you'd say that wouldn't seem "just" meaning justice wouldn't be served if evil people got in on the same thing as the good guys! So what type of people are we thinking? **Okay, so who is the most evil person you can think up?** If God is up here, who is on the lowest wrong of the morality ladder? Let's put Hitler here.

Ladder Slide with Hitler at the bottom.

Okay, Hitler is the worst person we can think of. Let's put some other people up here. Let's think of the best, most righteous, almost moral person of the last century. How about Mother Theresa?

Now, some of you may not know who Mother Teresa is. I would encourage you to investigate her life. She would clearly be one of the most moral, godly people I can think of. As a young woman she had a vision of Jesus and felt called to the slums of Calcutta, India for the rest of her life. She started a movement of Catholic nuns who lived in abject poverty helping lepers, people with HIV, the dying, the destitute— All in the name of Jesus. But if Mother Theresa were here she would not place herself on the same wrong as God. If you read her writings, you quickly learn she had a very humble view of herself, and her own righteousness. So let's place her name here.

Ladder Slide with MT 2/3s up.

Okay, let's think of one more really amazingly good person. Who would that be? For my generation, that would be Billy Graham. No person in the history of all humanity shared the good news of Jesus with more people than Billy Graham. But Billy wasn't living on the streets and poverty. He did really great stuff, but I think we should put Billy underneath Mother Theresa on the morality ladder.

Ladder Slide with BG underneath MT.

Now, where would I put my name? Well, from the outside looking in one might look at my life—hey Pastor, someone who is devoted the last 30 years of his life to leading local churches. From the outside looking in, one might think I am an especially moral person. Maybe put me about Hitler, and closer toward Billy.

Ladder Slide with ME 1/3 up.

Okay, **Where would you place yourself?**

It's an interesting question, isn't it?! I don't know about you, but I didn't kill 6 million Jews, so I'm guessing most would say we're a few rungs above Hitler, but are if we're thinking about what is right and just, let's admit. You probably aren't batting in the line up close to Mother Teresa or Billy Graham.

Maybe the solution would be join Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. Or maybe you and I could start a Youtube Channel and start broadcasting Billy Graham-like messages all over the internet, but even so...I don't know that getting a running start at this morality thing at this point is going to ever get us past where MT and BG sit. We still have our pasts to reckon with. I don't know about you. While I may not be an axe murderer, I'm not perfect. So maybe you're here?

Fair enough. So...

**What's your plan to make up the gap?**

Because clearly there's a gap, right? It's obvious. And what's interesting here is even Mother Teresa has a gap. Even though she was one of the most giving, loving, caring people in all the world even she would say she falls short of God's glorious standard of righteousness.

What does the Bible say about the gap? Maybe you've heard this verse before...

**"For all have sinned and *fall short* of the glory of God." Romans 3:23**

What do you think "all" means there? I think it means ALL! All of humanity has sinned. Sin simply means missing the target. When it comes to righteousness, some of us may hit the bulls eye here and there, but none of us hit it all the time. We all fall short. We all have this sin-gap which keeps us from God.

The good news of Christianity has some inherent bad news. We all fall short of the glory of God, and no amount of the trying harder method is going to make up the shortfall. So seeing our predicament, how does God respond? Let me show the answer. Read this with me:

**"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21**

Yeah, so the good news of Christianity is God knows we can't fix this problem on our own, so He comes in the flesh, in Christ to save us, to rescue us from our sin. Imagine for a moment [Nicky Gumbel book illustration]

- This hand is us, and this weight upon us is our sin.
- This hand is Jesus and He has no sin—perfectly righteous.
- The Bible tells us God comes to us in Christ, and does an exchange. He takes our sin upon Him, so we might then have His righteousness—not based on anything we could ever do for ourselves but based upon His love and grace for us, so we might spend eternity with Him.

Ladder Slide with cross on the left.

So right next to this ladder we could take a cross and place it here for Jesus died not only for the good people like MT and BG, but for the normal people, even for the most horrible people.

Because of Jesus taking our sin upon Himself, we now have access to God, peace with God.

We've been declared in right standing with God. Look at Romans 5:1-2:

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace** in which we now stand.” Romans 5:1-2

What's faith? Well, faith is believing in and depending upon. Everyone has faith. The strength of your faith lies in the reliability of what you're depending upon.

- Do you really want to believe and depend upon your own goodness to merit your life with God? Why would you do that? We just saw that doesn't work. The sin-gap is too huge.
- Or are you willing to trust in Jesus as the one who can save you, rescue you so you might today have peace with God and stand freely and forever in His grace?

### **What is God calling you to do, change or pray about?**

Is there really any good reason to reject this free gift of God?

Wouldn't it be great in the midst of a coronavirus world to know you can go to bed tonight knowing you are forever right with God through what Christ has done?

Is there someone in your life who needs you to share this ladder illustration with?

What is God calling you to do, change, or pray about?

Let's pray.

[pray]

Now, we often do **Q and A** after my messages, and we're going to do that now. If you'd like to click out of this video you certainly won't offend me, but if you want to hang for a few more minutes I'll answer some questions people sent into me re: this topic.