Jesus, Real Good News and the Light of the World

Acts 10:34-48

Everyone could use some good news from time to time, eh? In this world and probably in this room, people are without jobs, they are sick, injured, having trouble in their marriages, having trouble with family members, they are depressed, anxious, and maybe even angry about the station or circumstances they are in today. I could keep going on but that would be a lot like watching the news. Life is hard, everyone has difficulties, hurts, and failures and everyone needs the Good News. The problem can be that hearing the Good News at church is also a little bit like hearing good news on TV. It can seem uninteresting. For some reason our morbid curiosity desires “Dirty Laundry” as Don Henley would say. I am here to tell you that the Gospel, the Good News of God through Jesus, should be anything but uninteresting. It means everything to the person who believes it. If you were here on Christmas eve, you might recall the Angel’s message as recorded by Luke…

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:10-12

Unlike who will win the Super bowl, the gospel (Christ’s life, death and resurrection) is a matter of eternal life and death. Unlike what we are going to have for lunch after church, what Peter shares in Acts 10, beginning with verse 34, can be internalized and last forever. Remember the apostle Luke, who penned the history of Christ’s birth, also recorded Peter’s words in Acts:

“*So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.*” (Acts 10:34–35, ESV)

Peter was determined to preach the “glad tidings of great joy, to all people. He said:

“*As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed:*” (Acts 10:36–37, ESV)

“*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,*” (Acts 10:38–40, ESV)

“*not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*” (Acts 10:41–43, ESV)

The truth of Jesus’ birth, is to be shared by those of us who have come to know Him as our Savior. If you believe that a Savior was born to you, on that blessed day, than you are to be a messenger of that news. That Good News that is for all people. And this man who was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger, is more than just a man He is the light and life of all things…John wrote…

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:1-4

Maybe you are thinking that it is quite a stretch to equate Jesus with “The Word,” or the “Light.” Jesus said of Himself…

12 …“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

In fact, in the book of John, there are seven, self-proclaimed statements about who He was…

“I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51) As bread sustains physical life, so Christ offers and sustains spiritual life.

 “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12) To a world lost in darkness, Christ offers Himself as a guide.

“I am the door of the sheep.” (John 10:7,9) Jesus protects His followers as shepherds protect their flocks from predators.

“I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25) Death is not the final word for those in Christ.

“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11, 14) Jesus is committed to caring and watching over those who are His.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6) Jesus is the source of all truth and knowledge about God.

“I am the true vine.” (John 15:1, 5) By attached ourselves to Christ, we enable His life to flow in and through us. Then we cannot help but bear fruit that will honor the Father.

What do you think of this child who was born to Mary? I want to take a second to review some important points to consider with regard to “The News” that we should be focused on…

Jesus’ Birth (Just like we are born)

Jesus’ Life (Life He lived He didn’t live for Himself) (He set an example for us)

Jesus’ Death (Death will come for all of us)

Jesus’ Resurrection (Type of our resurrection) (If He was raised, we will be raised)

Jesus’ Ascension (Kingdom Inaugurated)(We will ascend to His throne)

Jesus’ Session (Jesus Rules, from Heaven, over the souls of those who have died and in our hearts). During Christ’s Inaugural reign, He still allows sin therefore (Trials and Tribulations)

Jesus’ Return (To establish final judgment of the living and the dead)

Jesus’ Kingdom fulfilled (To usher in a rule over all creation that is without sin, death, and sorrow.)

Eternal enjoyment of God through Christ…

So what happens when someone has their eyes open to the importance of this “Good News?”

To find out we can continue reading in Acts chapter 10…

“*While Peter was still* ***saying these things****, the* ***Holy Spirit fell on*** *all who* ***heard the word****. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of* ***the Holy Spirit was poured out*** *even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them* ***speaking in tongues*** *and* ***extolling God****…*” (Acts 10:44–46, ESV)

“…Then Peter declared, *“Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.*” (Acts 10:47–48, ESV)

So According to Luke’s account in Acts, the Good News of Christ the Savior works to accomplish its purpose through:

* The proclamation of the Word (preaching)
* The hearing of the Word (Spirit empowered)
* The pouring out of the Spirit
* Evidence of Newness in those who believe (New creation=New language, New desires, New Thinking, New purpose…)
* Praises to God
* And Baptism to commemorate the event (Baptism service next week)

Someone once told me that my job is to proclaim God’s Truth and God’s Truth is God’s Truth. They encouraged me that God speaks even if I don’t quite get it right and He’s got me covered when I’m right even if no one agrees with me, as long as I agree with Him. That being said, I want to finish today by telling you the Good News. I’m almost done for today…Don’t turn off, really listen, because it is life or death, feast or famine, heaven or hell. This isn’t some “dirty laundry” news that won’t matter tomorrow. These are the truths that are the light and life of all men.

* Truth about God—God is our Creator, we were made for Him; to know Him; and to live the way He designed us to live. Psalm 139:13-16; John 17:3;
* Truth about Mankind—Ever since man sought to be autonomous (decide his ways were better than God’s) we were separated from our Creator and we couldn’t live the way we were made to live for and enjoy God. Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; James 4:7; Romans 6:23
* Truth about Jesus—Jesus, who is fully God, came to live as one of us, fully man, so that He could represent us. He lived a perfect life so that we could have His perfection credited to our account. And He died to serve as a substitute for us. The punishment we deserved He Himself took so that we would not receive the wrath of God that we deserve for our rebellion. And because He rose again we believe He has the power to give us new life forever. Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:3; Romans 3:23-25; Colossians 1:19-20
* The only reasonable response—If we believe these truths, we should trust that Jesus is God and our Savior, we should agree that we are rebellious, and we should turn away from our autonomy and follow God’s Holy Spirit for direction in our lives. The Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth, through what God reveals as truth naturally, through the Holy Scriptures, and through what Christ reveals to us. Romans 10:9; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:13-14
* Finally, if we believe in Jesus, change our mind about who is in charge, and decide to follow God, we should be baptized to symbolically commemorate the baptism and cleansing that has come from God’s Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38; Titus 3:3-7

These are the truths that really matter. This is the News that we need to pay attention to. The bad news is going to play day in and day out in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Just as Jesus said that the poor would always be among us…So will bad news always be among us.

But we were chosen to hear the Good News for all people. And we were chosen for the good works He planned in advance for us. God wants you. God loves you, and God gave Himself up for you, so that no matter what the bad news is, you can live and breathe and enjoy your heavenly Father now and forever!