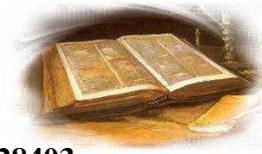


The Examiner



Published by the Winter Park church of Christ
Meeting at: 2122 Market Street; Wilmington NC 28403
www.winterparkcocnc.com

Vol. 9, No. 6

Edited by John Cripps

May 16th, 2021

Heard Any "Good News" Lately? - by W. Frank Walton - Camden, South Carolina

The phone rings late at night. We tense up, fearing bad news: "Oh no, what's happened?" News reports bombard us with depressing regularity of this world's harsh realities and tragic problems. Is "no news good news"? There is eternal good news that needs to be shouted from the housetops. The gospel means "good news"! "Good" means it's beneficial, profitable, giving true happiness; "news" means it's significant, timely. The gospel centers upon Jesus as the Savior of the world, in His life, person, work and teaching (**Mk. 1:1**). His advent upon the stage of human history was heralded as something wonderful. "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (**Lk. 2:10-11**, NASB). His mission was to proclaim the kingdom's good news (**Mk. 1:14**). His commission is, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (**Mk. 16:15**). This must be critical, earthshaking news! But people often think Jesus' coming was bad news, spoiling man's "fun." We

sometimes give the impression **Mark 16:15** means, "Go spread the bad news. You'll be embarrassed by this 'gospel' because it'll ruin your life and those you teach. He who joins our gloomy group will be miserable here and might avoid hell hereafter. But he who's unconverted will be envied because of his enjoyment of worldly pleasure." Does the gospel really mean "good news" to us? The good news in the first century startled the world by its radical, life-changing power when planted in human hearts. It gave great joy to those who obeyed it (**Acts 2:42; 8:8,39; 16:34**). It sparked riots and relentless persecution. Its ringing declaration was demanding, decisive, and exclusive in its dynamic content. The gospel's powerful message made people either glad, sad or mad, but never bored and indifferent. Why?

1. **The Gospel of Truth and Salvation.** The good news of Jesus is "the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (**Eph. 1:13**). The gospel alone reveals absolute, infallible and unchanging truth to a changing world. God cannot lie; Scripture cannot be broken. The gospel isn't a religious myth fabricated by

deluded men. Its historical reality has been reliably confirmed (**1 Cor. 15:1-8**). It's a fact that man is lost, separated by sin from God. In rebellion to God's sovereignty, we've "missed the mark" of His design for our potential. The just sentence of hell's reality is part of "the glad tidings" (**Lk. 3:18**, ASV). God isn't bluffing. We must know our true condition before we see the urgent need of the "joyful tidings." His abiding truth is the only authoritative standard, not the volatile opinions and unreliable feelings of fallible men. All competing ideas and sophisticated philosophies contradicting the gospel are false. The gospel truth is the only reliable source of man's purpose, meaning and blessing. It shows the futility of sin.

Only the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (**Rom. 1:16**). Education, money, social prestige and military might are impotent in saving man in his greatest need. Salvation is deliverance from a real, life-threatening danger. Today, we say a relief pitcher has many "saves"; an accountant "saves" us money on taxes. But think of waking up in the middle of the night. Your lungs are filled with smoke. You cough violently. You feel intense heat. Your house is on fire! You panic, realizing you and your family are about to be burned alive! But at that moment of awesome terror, firemen suddenly break through the billowing smoke, grabbing you and your family, and carrying you all through the inferno to safety. You have been saved! Think how much greater is the gospel, which tells of Jesus

("Jehovah is salvation"), "for it is he who will save His people from their sins" (**Matt. 1:21**). Jesus saved us from the fires of eternal torment in hell, since we were under the curse of sin and the judicial wrath of God. Only Jesus could have died at the right time, borne our punishment on the cross, and saved us from eternal ruin. If obeying the gospel doesn't get us excited about being saved, let's check our pulse to see if we're alive!

2. **The Gospel of Peace and Promise.** The "gospel of peace" (**Eph. 6:15**) offers everyone the peace of a right relationship with the Creator. You are just as important to God as anyone else. By obeying the gospel, anyone can be adopted into the family of God and become heir to the abundant spiritual blessings in Christ. This is "the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (**Eph. 3:6**).

Biblically, peace is more than just the absence of conflict. It's the full restoration of a right, living relationship. The breach has been healed in complete reconciliation. The priceless blood of Jesus paid the infinite debt of sin to satisfy the justice of God (**Eph. 2:13-17**). His mediation enables us to fully know our Father, which makes for life's highest good. We have peace within ourselves as we meet the gracious conditions of pardon. We have the promise of a loving Father's constant concern and care. This gives us tranquility even in turmoil. Because the gospel of peace and promise has totally changed our lives for the better, we act as peacemakers in gladly sharing the

gospel.

3. **The Gospel of Life, Immortality and Hope.** "Our Savior Christ Jesus . . . abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (**2 Tim. 1:10**). The good news answers two profound questions of time and eternity: (1) "How should we then live?" (**Ezek. 33: 10**) and (2) "If a man dies, will he live again?" (**Job 14:14**) Everyone must decide how to live. Jesus came to give a truly abundant life (**Jn. 10:10**). This is the unceasing supply of the greatest quality of life ever known. "For of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace" (**Jn. 1:16**). In Him, wave after wave of refreshing grace for living is supplied by truly knowing Him (**1 Jn. 5:20**). He didn't just tell us about life, He is the Life (**Jn. 14:6**). He is the living model of successful spiritual living and human potential. He enlightens us to discern the important from the trivial. He shows us how to overcome temptation, meet and deal with others, always please the Father and draw near in communion. Abiding in Jesus gives the spiritual life to bear much fruit (**Jn. 15:8**) of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (**Gal. 5:22-23**). The gospel transforms us to be life's real winners (**Rom. 8:37**). We have this bold confidence because Jesus arose from the grave, assuring us of immortality. "Because I live, you shall live also" (**Jn. 14:19**). This hope of heaven in the gospel (**Col. 1:5**) is priceless beyond anything this vain world can give. The philosopher Jean

Paul Sarte viewed life thusly: "Everything is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance. . . . I choked with rage at this gross absurd being." The "brilliant" atheist Ingersoll said, "Every cradle asks us, 'Whence?' and every coffin, 'Whither?'. . . Death is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We cry aloud and the only answer is the wailing echo of our cry." Thank God for the hope of heaven!

Death is a doorway leading some to the presence of the Lord, world without end. The gospel light enables us to see beyond today to the day of eternity. Let's appreciate and be motivated by the irreplaceable gospel, which "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (**1 Pet. 1:3-5**). ***Via - Guardian of Truth XXX: 8, pp. 227-228 - April 17, 1986***

The Language Of Olympia - "Ye Did Run Well" - by Clint Springer

In a number of passages Paul alludes to the Olympian games of ancient Greece and makes figurative comparison to the Christian life. One of these statements concerns a former state of the Galatians and is found in that epistle, chapter five, verse seven. The Galatian Christians had started a good race but were returning to

Judaism. Most of us now, no doubt, can remember similar circumstances of people who "did run well" but who have now gone back into perdition. Like Paul, perhaps, we will become the enemy of many by simply speaking the truth on these matters. (**Gal.4:16**)

This same figure is exemplified several other places. In **Hebrews 12:1**, inasmuch as we are compassed about by so many great witnesses, we are told to lay aside the weight that would burden us down and to run with patience the race that is set before us The Greeks, I am told, would practice with weights upon their ankles to strengthen their muscles; when the actual race was started, these weights would be laid aside that the athlete might feel fleet-footed and free. Whatever deters our service to God is like (illegible, sic) to the Olympian runner and must be put away. Paul said in **Phil. 3:13-14**, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In **2Tim. 4:7-8** we see that it was after the race was won that he was able to say that the crown of life was his. (see also **I Cor. 9:24**) Olympia was a place in ancient Greece and all these passages mention indirectly the language of the games held there.

There are many points of analogy that can be seen from this comparison: Only qualified Greeks could run; only qualified Christians are in the race. The necessity of perseverance indicates that in both races only the winner was crowned; Paul's crown, you remember, was laid up for him because he had finished his course! All of us receive joy from seeing an athlete run well. A "has been", however, is most pathetic, and this is true of the punch-drunk boxer as well as the disciple of Christ that (past tense) "did run well".

Such thoughts as these remind me of the toothpaste commercial about the boy who had just won the race: Says the mother to the coach, "I wish I could get him to move that fast when it comes to brushing his teeth!" And so it is in things pertaining to religion today. How many times have you wished for a literal "hot-stick" (an electric prod used in driving cattle) to help people work for the Lord?

We're not in competition with one another as Christians in this race, but rather it is a personal trial with each individual running against Satan. Who will win in your race, however, depends on you. (**I Cor. 9:26-27; Phil. 2:16**) To hear the words "ye did run well" but were hindered is to be lost! Let us lay aside the weight and get on with the business at hand. *** Via The Gospel Guardian, VOLUME 19, May 4, 1967 - NUMBER 1, PAGE 8b***

**ARE YOU FOCUSED ON THE PRIZE? - LOOKING UNTO
JESUS THE AUTHOR and FINISHER OF OUR FAITH?
OR IS YOUR FOCUS ON THE THINGS OF THE WORLD!
THE HERE and NOW! - NOT ETERNITY!**