

Peace be with you. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our study in the book of the *Injil*, which is Arabic for *Gospel* or *Good News*, we heard the Lord Jesus Christ, after He had risen, command His disciples, saying, "***Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.***" And after Jesus was taken up into heaven, a man by the name of Paul, who had converted from being a brutal religious zealot to becoming a devout follower of Christ, wrote the following:

"[God called me to be his apostle, and gave me the task of making known His good news--the good news] he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures!...I am not ashamed of the [good news that I am preaching], because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes....For in the [good news] a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last!"

The good news, the good news, the good news! What is this **good news** that the Word of God tells us about again and again? Today, with the help of God, we would like to talk about this **Good News** which is proclaimed in the Holy Scriptures. But before we talk about **the Good News**, we need to remember **the bad news**.

What is **the bad news**? You may recall that, in the beginning, after God created the heavens and the earth, God made Adam and Eve, placing them in

the earthly garden of Paradise. God created them so that they might know Him, love Him, obey Him and glorify Him forever. However, to test them, God said to Adam: "You can take from all the trees of the garden, except from the tree in the middle of the garden. You must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will die!" The bad news is that Adam and Eve listened to the serpent, that is, the devil, who tempted them to eat fruit from the forbidden tree. Adam and Eve's sin brought trouble and death into the world, contaminating them and all their offspring. As we often hear: "An epidemic is not confined to the one from whom it originates!" God's Word tells us the bad news when it says:

*"Man is destined to die once, and **after that to face judgment!**...The Lord is coming-to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him!"*

Therefore, the **bad news** is that **we are all sinners and we must face God's righteous judgment!**

However, **the Good News** is that right there in the garden of Paradise, God, who is full of mercy, proclaimed that He would one day send into the world a Person who would be unstained by sin, born of a virgin. This holy Person, this righteous **Redeemer**, would offer Himself to be killed as a sacrifice to pay for the sins of Adam and all his descendants. The punishment for sin which we deserve would fall on this sinless Redeemer. That is the Good News which God announced on the day that Adam and Eve sinned.

God used many men to announce the coming of this Redeemer, also called **the Messiah**. Each of God's prophets announced something about the Messiah, so that when He came, everyone could recognize that He was the One whom God had appointed. For example, the prophet Isaiah, who preceded the Messiah by about seven hundred years, prophesied how the Messiah would be born, saying: *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel-which means, 'God with us.'"* Another prophet, Micah, prophesied that the Messiah would come from heaven and be born upon earth in the village of **Bethlehem**. That is precisely where the Messiah was born. Yet Micah prophesied this hundreds of years before the Messiah's birth.

But the prophets did not merely announce the Messiah's birth. They also prophesied that **the Messiah would suffer and die** in the place of sinners. For example, the prophet David wrote that people would despise the Messiah, torture Him, pierce His hands and His feet, and kill Him. And David not only announced the death of the Messiah, he also predicted that **God would raise the Messiah** from the dead, thus proving that He was the one and only Savior whom God sent to save the children of Adam from the penalty of sin.

Little argument exists over the birth of the Messiah, but many stumble over His death and resurrection. They do not understand how could God just stand by and watch as men humiliated the Messiah whom He had sent. What most people fail to grasp is that God, who loves us, is the very One who purposed that the Messiah should suffer like that **for our sins**. Yet that is what the

prophets proclaimed, saying: *"It was the Lord's will to crush [the Messiah-as a sacrifice to pay for sin]!"*

Do we believe the prophets? We say we believe them. If we really **believe the prophets**, we must also **believe what they wrote**. We must remember that the prophets did not speak their own ideas. God planted in their spirits what they were to say. Therefore, if we refuse to believe those prophets, who are we really rejecting? We are rejecting **God**-because He is the One who inspired the prophets to prophesy that the Messiah would die as a sacrifice to take away sin.

It is because God loves the world and does not want anyone to perish in sin that He planned the Messiah's death. It was necessary that a righteous Person die for unrighteous people to save them from God's judgment. That is what the offering of sacrifices of sheep and goats symbolized in earlier times. **Jesus Christ**, who was born of a virgin, by the power of God, is **the perfect and final sacrifice** that God gave.

As the African saying goes, "There is no need to draw someone a picture of a dwarf, if one is standing before you." In the same way, since we now have a perfect and permanent Sacrifice for sins, there is no need to weary ourselves by continuing to offer imperfect, symbolic sacrifices. Can you remember what the Lord Jesus declared on the cross just before He died? He said, *"It is finished!"* He paid our debt of sin, once and for all time. The only thing that remains for us to do is **believe it!** As we already read, the Scripture says: The Good News of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection *"is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes!"*

Sadly, many refuse to believe in Him, saying that this whole thing about the death and resurrection of Jesus is just a made-up story. Yet when we study the Gospel, we discover that everything the prophets prophesied about the Messiah was **fulfilled** by Jesus Christ. **Everything**...concerning His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension. Thus, the Gospel declares that *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures [of the prophets], that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures [of the prophets]."* **Everything happened just as the prophets predicted.**

Those who hated Jesus mocked Him, tortured Him and killed Him, and those who loved Him buried Him. But death could not keep Him in the grave. We saw that, on the third day after His crucifixion, some women got up at dawn and went to the tomb where Jesus was buried, and discovered that it was open and empty! After Jesus died and rose again, He showed Himself to His disciples over a period of forty days. Over five hundred people saw Him after His resurrection. It was true! The Messiah had conquered death, one of man's greatest enemies! Jesus' resurrection proved that God has accepted His sacrifice as a full payment for the sins of the children of Adam, so that whoever believes in Him might share in His eternal life.

That is the Good News. **The Lord Jesus Christ died to take away your sins, and He came out of the grave on the third day to give you eternal life.** The purpose of this Good News is to save all those who believe it.

Therefore, the question that you must answer is: **"Do you believe it?"** The Word of God says: "Today is the day of salvation! If you hear the Good News, do not harden your heart! Believe!" Salvation is not a result of the works that

we do, because **no one can do enough works to earn Paradise**. God will never **sell** you His great salvation; He wants to **give** it to you! Good deeds, prayers and fasting may give you a good feeling inside, but they do not satisfy God's righteousness! There is only one way for you to enter God's Paradise.

1.) You must first **recognize** that you are a sinner and that you have no strength to please God.

2.) Then you must **believe** that Jesus Christ is the Savior that God sent to die on the cross to take away your sins and that God raised Him from the dead to give you eternal life.

If you believe this Good News, **you can be sure that you will be taken to Paradise after you die**, because God Himself has promised us in His Word that we can **know** that we have eternal life, **if we believe** on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Let me pause here to tell you how a young Senegalese man named Malick became a believer in Jesus Christ. As a young man he was faithful to pray five times a day and to observe the yearly fast, but he did not know where he would go after he died. Malick asked all around, but didn't receive a clear answer. But when he studied the Gospel {Injil}, he discovered that **he could know where he would go after he died**, because Jesus the Messiah Himself says in the Gospel: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me **has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.**" He also said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me **will live**, even though he dies!" Thus, Malick*

repented of his own efforts to save himself and believed in the Messiah of whom all the prophets prophesied, saying, "Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." Malick says that he took all his hope and hung it upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And from that time until now God has brought peace to his spirit. He says he no longer has a troubled conscience. His future is wonderfully bright because of the work of Jesus on the cross. In his life as a disciple of Christ, sometimes Malick face trouble and affliction because his faith differs from the opinions of his relatives and friends, but he says he has peace. The peace of God fills his heart and his mind. And Jesus who has given it to him says: "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first...Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

*What the Lord has done for Malick and in him, He can do for each of you. He asks one thing from you: **That you give Him your whole heart.** He will do the rest. For the Lord Jesus Himself has said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

Are you weary and burdened because of your sins? Would you like to find rest for your soul? If you believe the Good News that the Messiah died for you and rose again for you, God will forgive you of your sins, judge you as righteous and write your name in the Book of Life. If you believe this Good News, God will mark you as His own and send the Spirit of Jesus into your

heart. The Holy Spirit, who lives in you, will change your heart, your life and your way of living, because the Scripture says: *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*

Wherever you are, whatever your situation, whether you are a man or a woman, old or young, the Lord Jesus Christ can give you a new life-**if you believe in Him**. He died for you so that you might live with God forever. **Do you believe this Good News?**

Thank you for listening...

May God bless you. We leave you with a verse of Scripture that speaks about the wonderful assurance God gives to all who place their hope in God's Good News of salvation. The Scripture says:

"[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life-not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel!"

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