

“It’s Good News Extravaganza Sunday”

Each week after I tape my sermons for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, Beverly and I watch them to see how they went. I have noticed that I occasionally have a slip of the tongue and use the wrong word or a wrong name. I hope you will be alert and recognize that it was just that, a slip of the tongue.

Many of us at Eastway Baptist go back 74 plus years and I can guarantee anyone that none of us have ever witnessed such horrific times like we are witnessing now. I know that our citizens were distraught during WW2 with the threat of the Nazi’s and the Fascists and the Japanese threatening our very shores. The protests during the Vietnam War were pretty bad and during that time there were the Hiaght Ashbury riots in LA and then the riots following the famous Rodney King verdict. And now, just this past Thursday night, a man murdered 8 FedEx employees and wounded several others before taking his own life. The news is so consistently and constantly bad that I have actually curtailed most of my FoxNews watching.

I am not advocating an Ostrich-kind-of-approach to life where we bury our heads in the sand and pretend everything is just hunky-dorey. But I am saying that there are better places we can spend our time. I want to know what is going on in our world, but I refuse to let the world beat me down and get me depressed, and believe me, I have recently fought depression because of it.

I have never been a big fan of gospel music but the words of that old country gospel tune, “This world is not my home,” say something to me with all that’s going on in this not-my-home world. “I’m just a passin’ through.”

So, here’s some really good news for all who are in Christ. I’m calling our lesson today and perhaps over the next couple of weeks, **“The Good News Extravaganza.”** This is not going to be a feel-good sermon and it’s not going to be party time or your best life now, but it is

going to be the gospel truth, and that's always good news. And I'm gong to present it in the form of good news points.

Good News Extravaganza Point #1,

"I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene."

And I do.

I have never in my life stood amazed in anyone's presence. I have never met anyone that I was in such awe of that I was starstruck just by being around him or her. I might be that way if I were to ever meet Clint Eastwood, but he is about the only person that could maybe have that effect on me. And even then, I kinda doubt it. What has Mr. Eastwood ever done that would deserve that reaction from anyone? But the Lord Jesus? That's a totally different matter altogether.

For beginners, Jesus is God. He is the Son of God and God the Son. He is eternal and has always been there. He and the Father and the Spirit all chipped in and created everything. And since Jesus is God He is perfect and sinless and absolutely holy.

That anyone can stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus is pretty amazing, especially Johnny T. Helms. But, I'm in good company. Remember what the apostle Paul said about himself? ¹² *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,*

¹³ *even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.*

¹⁵ *It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. (1 Tim. 1:12-15 NAU)*

And what about you? You know yourself well enough to know that it's pretty amazing that you can stand in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene. But take heart, beloved of God. Once you are His, you are always His. Not because you deserve it or have earned it, but because **God is like that.**

One must be qualified to have that privilege. And in the Bible the word that comes closest to qualified is "justified." The only way, and I

do mean the only way anyone can be qualified to enter the kingdom of God is by being justified. So, no one can stand in God's presence without having been somehow justified. And just to make sure we're on the same page, who justifies us? God does. "*It is God who justifies.*" Rom. 8:33. Are you beginning to get the picture that our salvation is all of God? I hope so. If any of it is up to me, I'm in trouble.

There's more to this whole justification work than our merely being justified. It also means that we have been declared righteous. We don't actually become righteous like Jesus is righteous. We are merely declared to be righteous. It's called "imputed righteousness." It's the kind of righteousness those who are still in these sinful, flesh and blood, mortal bodies are given. And everyone who comes to faith in Jesus is declared righteous, everyone. Even the poorest Christian you know is declared righteous by God the Father. Got anybody in mind?

Our righteousness is imputed or written down on our heavenly account. I wouldn't carry this analogy too far, but we can think of God as the CEO of the Bank of Heaven. And every time He justifies another ungodly person, He makes a deposit of righteousness into that person's account. Like I said, I don't plan on carrying that image any further than that lest I sound like one of the health and wealth prosperity preachers. But it makes my point. So I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

Point #2 in our "Good News Extravaganza," is this,

#2, "We will never have to wonder if we're going to make it."

Now if I cared at all about my eternal destiny but wasn't sure if I were going to heaven or hell or limbo or purgatory, that would keep me up at night. And with traffic the way it is these days, I would probably be extra careful driving to work or the store every day to make sure I didn't get hit by some careless driver. I am so watchful now days after Beverly and I went through our accident just over a month ago. And I wouldn't dare blow my horn these days at another driver who cut me off in traffic. Ya never know if they have a gun and just itchin' to use it.

Phyllis and David Gales wondered for a moment or two if they were going to make it home the other day when they were driving back from the beach and a car cut directly in front of them almost hitting them on a straight stretch of 74 outside of Laurinburg. Phyllis was driving and ran off the road and managed to stop before going down a steep embankment. It was looking kind of doubtful for a few moments, but the Lord was certainly with them. Which explains why Phyllis was driving and not David.

But as it is, beloved, none of us who are in Christ ever have to give our eternal destinies a second thought.

Now listen to this. The Bible says that all who call upon the name of the Lord **will be saved**. And that is parallel to Jesus telling His apostles to get in the boat, we're going to the other side of the lake. When the storm came up and the apostles were terrified and woke Jesus up, He lovingly rebuked them and said, "O ye of little faith." Do you know what that meant? It means that when Jesus tells you you're going to the other side, beloved, you're going to the other side, come hell or high water. When you call upon the name of the Lord you can know for sure you are going to the other side.

You and I go through some pretty scary stuff in this life and sooner or later one of those scary things just might take us out of here. But you can count on this. If you are in Christ, you will make it to the other side.

And finally, point #3 in our "Good News Extravaganza," **The good news of the gospel teaches that God has satisfied Himself through His satisfaction with His Son's sacrifice.**

Remember that old, old, very old Rolling Stones song, "I cain't git no satisfaction?" Well, God can; and He did.

Do you realize that right now, everyone in Christ can say with absolute confidence, as bold and as brash as it may seem, "**God is satisfied with me because God is satisfied with Jesus.**" And because God is satisfied with all who are in Christ, all who are in Christ are at peace with God. And nothing says satisfaction like peace.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (Rom. 5:1 NAU)

The fact that we have peace with God says that God is satisfied to the absolute power with the finished work of Jesus on the cross on our behalf.

Beloved of God at Eastway Baptist Church, may I be so cavalier as to say that you and I have absolutely nothing to worry about at any given moment in our day? Being that by the grace of God we are in Christ through His baptizing us into His body by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are signed, sealed and delivered. We are now one spirit with Jesus. We are now once and for all joined to the Lord Jesus. And nothing under heaven can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

The Gospel.