

# HE SAVES US

## *Forgiveness, Freedom, Transformation, & Resurrection*

(preached 2/18/24)

During the Superbowl, a Christian organization named **“He Gets Us”** ran a 30-second add which showed Christians washing the feet of unbelievers. Immediately after, the responses on social media varied anywhere from full support to cries of “heresy!” Last Tuesday at Bible Study I responded saying that while I understood the sincere motivation behind the ad, I stressed the importance of **sharing the WHOLE GOSPEL**.

**The Gospel is good news and it’s a story**—the greatest story ever told—and the MC is Jesus Himself. It’s all about His motivation, what He did, what He said, and what He’s going to do in the future. *As Christians we must tell His entire story* and not just parts of it, and I felt the “He Gets Us” ad only told part.

PART of the story is that of **a holy God Who calls upon us to turn from sin** and live righteous lives. A God of justice and truth Who metes out consequences toward the unrepentant.

Another part is that of **a loving God willing to extend grace**, compassion, and mercy...Who is patient, gentle, and kind.

God is all of these things all of the time without contradiction or compromise.

**Christians who fall down on the holiness** and truth side of things take bold moral stances in the culture wars, aren’t afraid to quote the Bible in public, and have devoted themselves to preserving God’s truth.

**They can also be hardhearted, contentious**, and lack the same compassion that Jesus did. They come off as condescending and their presentation of the Gospel can be in response to a watered down woke version. They were the biggest critics of the “He Gets Us” ad.

**CHRISTIANS WHO FALL DOWN ON THE LOVE AND COMPASSION** side are more seeker-friendly, but also tend to view the Bible as fluid and interpretive. Being led by their hearts, they fall into the temptation of molding God, the Bible, and truth into a false image that they worship, also creating a false Gospel.

## **THE SOLUTION IS NOT TO MERGE THE TWO.**

*The solution is to know and share the entire story of Jesus* and since I like things to be broken down into simple lists, here it is in order:

- Forgiveness
- Freedom
- Transformation
- Resurrection

**First let's identify the problem...why we need Saving in the first place.**

**When Adam ate the FF, humanity and all of creation fell and was cursed with death.** Given free will, humanity rebelled and thus became capable of evil and thus committing sins.

*[Rom 5:12 ESV]* Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [ADAM], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned--

- Why is there evil in the world? It's our fault—we caused it.
- Why does God allow it? Because He gives us free will.
- Why doesn't He do something about it? He did: He gave us Jesus the first time. He will do more when Jesus comes a second time.

***The curse of death is death in every way.*** Not just getting older, but the separation of our souls from God—which is death.

**At Mt. Sinai things got worse because God gave the Law**—the Commandments. “Thou shalt” do good things, and “thou shalt not” do bad things. Even though God's laws were holy, just, and good our rebellious nature hated it and still does.

*[Rom 7:5 ESV]* 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, **aroused by the law,** were **at work in our members** to **bear fruit for death.**

What's more is **that records of our sins were kept**...in heavenly book called “the Book of Deeds.” (*Revelation 20:12*). Every time we do something wrong in this life, it's recorded there and used against us at Judgment. The list of these deeds is debt toward God—“money” that we owe Him and the problem is: we can't pay it.

***You might be thinking: “I thought the Gospel was GOOD news?!”***

## **I haven't started sharing the Gospel yet.**

*So far we're only identifying the problem*, and the problem is that it needs to be identified with unbelievers. There are 2 types of unbelievers: **those who know the ship is sinking and those who don't.**

According to history, **the crew of the Titanic knew the ship was going down** before the passengers, who were blissfully unaware. At 12:05 AM the passengers saw the crew uncovering the lifeboats and got suspicious. At 12:45 the crew fired off emergency flares and the historical account says that mainly "experienced" ship travelers knew this was an alert while others didn't. *Everyone was finally clued in when the ship began to yaw and split apart.*

**We need to share the problem with all unbelievers: the ones who think they're safe, and the ones who know the ship is going down.**

**YET THE PROBLEM ISN'T PART OF THE GOSPEL** and we shouldn't be telling people it is. No one likes to get bad news and if the person you're talking with confronts you, respond "I haven't gotten to the good news yet."

*When the doctor says we have a tumor*, it's not good news. When he says he will operate, take it own, and that the recovery rate is excellent: that's good news. But first he has to be honest and tell us that we have a tumor. He needs to tell us the true state of our being so we can make a decision.

*Unbelievers who don't know the ship is sinking need to be told.* After that it's the Holy Spirit's job to convict them.

Unbelievers who know the ship is sinking still need to be told, and the following will happen to them:

**[2Co 7:10 NKJV]** For godly sorrow produces repentance [leading] to salvation, not to be regretted;

"Godly sorrow" is the moment an unbeliever doesn't just realize they sinned, but has **the revelation that their sin is why Jesus went to the Cross**. A completely innocent man Who only did good, never did bad, was crucified for THEM. The first time an unbeliever has this realization, their hearts will break.

***“What about Hell?” people ask.*** Again: Hell is the consequence to the problem, and not part of the Gospel...**but people need to be told.** When the crew of the Titanic knew the ship was going down, it’s claimed they shouted “women and children to the lifeboats!” Please remember that for the first hour, most passengers didn’t believe anything was wrong even after the lifeboats were uncovered the flares sent up. If I were a member of the crew and a skeptical woman refused to get on the lifeboat with her kids, I might have said: “the ship is going down and the waters are 40 degrees! If you don’t drown you’ll freeze in minutes!”

Irony: the in the Bible, the dark depths of the ocean is compared to Hell. **THERE IS A LIFE AFTER DEATH CONSEQUENCE** to stubborn rejection of Christ, and it’s the underworld instead of Heaven. People need to be told. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If your heart breaks at the thought, that’s a good thing, and let it break whilst sharing this with another. No Christian should be happy that someone goes there.

**Humanity owes God a debt we can’t pay.** We’ve all sinned and fallen short of God’s glory. The purpose of wrath and vengeance is the same with both God and man: ***to collect on the debt of sin.***

**“Reckoning” is a financial term**...and a legal one, and a religious one. It means to settle accounts. To collect the debt. To take revenge for an injustice done. If we can’t pay our mortgage, the bank forecloses and takes our house—reckoning. If we reach Judgment and we still have an outstanding debt of sin that hasn’t been paid, it’s a day of reckoning where God settles accounts with us.

***The good news begins at the Cross:***

***[Rom 5:6-10 ESV]*** 6 For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died [on the Cross] for the ungodly.** 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- 8 but **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be **saved by him from the wrath [reckoning] of God.** 10 For if while we were enemies we were **reconciled** [synonym!!!] to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

**The word “reconciled” is a synonym of reckoning.** Jesus was and is the sacrificial Lamb of God, a divine SUBSTITUTE for reckoning. You haven’t been paying your mortgage and have just received a foreclosure notice from the bank, saying if it’s not paid by this date, they take your house. You can’t pay...you don’t have the money.

**Your older brother finds out** and says “*I have the money and will pay the bank in full. The house will be yours forever.*” Maybe you’re conflicted about it because 1) you’ve been irresponsible with your money, spending it on frivolous things. 2) you’ve mistreated your older brother badly, and he has no reason to be nice to you. Why would he make such an offer?

**Jesus is also called “the Kinsman Redeemer”** which literally is, in the Bible, an older brother who buys our debt!

**INSTEAD OF US HAVING TO FACE THE DAY OF RECKONING IN DEBT, JESUS RECONCILES US TO GOD OUR FATHER BY PAYING OUR DEBT!**

“Forgiveness” and “forgiven” are also financial terms when a debt is clear.

The beginning of our Salvation and *the good news is that God the Son loves us so much He’s willing to buy or debt despite how we’ve treated Him.*

**FATHER GOD WILL ACCEPT THE PAYMENT, FORGIVE ALL, AND CLEAR OUR SLATE.**

**[Isa 44:22 NKJV]** (Thus says God) “I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”

**“Blotted out” means erased.** Remember the Book of Deeds I mentioned earlier? Where all our sins are recorded? God erases it...just as if (justify!!!) it never happened! As far as the east is from the west (there are no east and west poles!)

GRACE is that God will forgive all our sins, not because we DID something to earn it.  
GRACE is that Father God is willing to take the payment from His Son Jesus vs us.  
GRACE is that God gives us all the rewards that Jesus earned, instead of giving us the punishment we deserved.

Which brings us to FREEDOM. Anything that God calls sin is slavery.

**[Jhn 8:31-36 NKJV]** 31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How [can] You say, 'You will be made free'?" 34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 "And a slave does not

abide in the house forever, [but] a son abides forever. 36 "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

**If God declares "x" to be a moral sin** in the Bible, it's still a sin today. Note: things like eating pork were never declared moral sins, but were part of the dietary restrictions. *Moral sins were things like adultery, stealing, murder, lying, etc.*

**I understand that things which were once taboo** in our society are now openly embraced, applauded, and practiced. Even signed into law. *Yet if these things were declared unrighteous by God back at Sinai thousands of years ago, they're still unrighteous today regardless of modern social trends.*

That being said, **sin is stronger than us**. If it weren't, we wouldn't need Jesus. It does no good for a Christian to tell an unbeliever that they need to stop living a sinful lifestyle: *they can't overcome it any better than we could or can.*

**THE CURSE** of sin and death that entered into us at Adam's disobedience sets us up to lose:

**[Rom 7:8 NKJV]** 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all [manner of evil] desire. For apart from the law sin [was] dead.

**[Rom 7:14-20 NKJV]** 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that [it is] good. 17 But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will [to do], I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do], that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not [to do], it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

***Sin and Death are a curse.*** Let's talk about curses and start by saying they go farther than just saying the F-word. Believe it or not, stubbing your toe and saying an expletive isn't cursing or swearing.

As I've taught before **curses are directional**, aimed at a person, place, or thing. They're more powerful when coming from an authority figure. ***The curse we came under at the Garden of Eden could only be undone by God.*** We don't have the willpower or fortitude to overcome it.

**Jesus was and is God.** He was both the Lamb of God and the Royal High Priest of the Heavens who set us free. He is more powerful than sin. He has dominion over death and has the keys of both it and Hades itself.

***He broke the curse*** that entered into us upon Adam eating the bad fruit and then was made worse with the giving of the Law.

**[Luk 4:18 NKJV]** 18 "The Spirit of the LORD [is] upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to [the] poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to [the] captives And recovery of sight to [the] blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

***Notice that with the sharing of the Good News what follows is LIBERTY for the captives and FREEDOM to those who are oppressed.***

**Who are the captives being held prisoner by?** What is doing the oppressing to the oppressed? It's not the devil or the government, ***it's the curse of sin and death made worse by the Law.***

Jesus freed us from all this so we could live another way:

**[Gal 3:10-14 NKJV]** 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed [is] everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God [is] evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed [is] everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

**Verse 10:** trying to "do" the law (do good and restrain from evil by yourself) requires absolute perfection because God's standard is that all of the law needs to be obeyed all the time. This is impossible, of course, but the smallest violation brings the curse of all the law down upon oneself!

**Verse 13:** Jesus fulfilled the law for us. He was able to live the life of verse 10. His death on the Cross offered the most amazing exchange: ***he takes on our debt, and we get His freedom.*** He became a slave [temporarily] so we could be sons & daughters.

## *How is a Christian supposed to live after being forgiven? What does freedom mean?*

**First:** we are **to live righteous lives and the moral commandments are our guidelines** for doing so. Sinning isn't freedom, yet our flesh wants to interpret grace that way. It's only our flesh which concludes that, since our debt is paid for all time, now we live any way we want and we're still "in."

*Jesus has set us free from being enslaved by sin and its power over us: going back to that isn't freedom, but slavery.*

Second: **we now live by faith**. What does that mean?

- We have faith that Jesus' death on the Cross truly forgave all.
- We have faith that Jesus' power is greater than all sin, even those we feel are our "Kryptonite" and may have weighed us down for years.
- We have faith that He's willing to have this power flow through us so we can overcome. That He makes it available and doesn't expect us to fight things out alone.

**Third:** notice that the comparison Jesus makes is *slave vs son*. Let's go deeper and then we'll conclude.

SLAVES were regular people who owed money and couldn't pay. They were either sold by their parents, they sold themselves, or were forced into it by government and the purpose was to pay off the debts they owed.

*A slave went and worked for someone else who wasn't family.*

- They were property and had few rights.
- Their masters owed them no loyalty or love.
- They were forced to work and serve.
- They could be beaten, cast out, and sold off.
- They weren't paid and inherited nothing.
- They weren't part of the family.
- Their whole lives were predicated on their performance.

*SONS were family.*

- They were in no danger of getting kicked out, sold, or disowned.
- They owed nothing. They were family.
- Their Father still had expectations of them and would discipline them if they did wrong, but it was about preparing their character for their destiny as heirs.



- Though they worked for the family, they were also predestined to inherit everything the family owned: land, home, possessions, business, money.

Let's do an important comparison: ***the slave worked because FOR freedom and still got nothing, always at risk of being cast out if he didn't live up to expectations.***

**A son worked FROM a position of freedom, knowing his place in his family was secure and that he was set to inherit all.**

You and I are sons and daughters of God. We are not slaves.

**[Jhn 12:36 NKJV]** 36 "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

**[2Co 6:18 NKJV]** 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

**[Gal 3:26 NKJV]** 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

**[Gal 4:5-6 NKJV]** 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

**[Heb 2:10 NKJV]** 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom [are] all things and by whom [are] all things, in ***bringing many sons to glory***, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Next week we'll cover transformation and resurrection, but for now let's remember the first two aspects of the Gospel are forgiveness and freedom.

Let's never leave any aspect of Jesus' story out, but tell people everything.

Let's remember we're doing so FROM a position of being a son or daughter of God: forgiven and free!

Our motivation for the person we're telling is that they'll be sons and daughters too!