**The Gospel Message**

In this first lesson we are going to learn about the most important message in the world! It is so important that it effects every single person that has and will ever live. It’s the message of the **‘Gospel,’** which literally means **“Good News!”**

*Illustration: ‘Gossip’ the Gospel…*

Jesus tells us to: “Go make disciples…” i.e. go and share the Good News with everyone!

Okay, so what is this *Good News*?

We’ll let’s start with the *bad news* so that we can understand the *Good News* better!

1. God is Holy, but we are not!

God is Holy, sinless and magnificently perfect. When God first created humankind, Adam and Eve (which means ‘Man & Woman,’) they were beautifully and perfectly made in God’s image. There was no death in the world either. But they fell from that wonderful condition when they rebelled against God and disobeyed Him, bringing sin and death into the world.

**When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.** – **Romans 5:12 NLT**

They rather obeyed Satan, who himself was a *‘fallen angel’* than listen to their Creator and original Master. Since *“the fall of mankind,”* all humans have inherited Adam’s rebellious or sinful nature (called: *‘Original Sin’*) and we are *all* by nature sinners and we are *all* born into a world where *Satan is our master*. This will be covered in greater detail in *Lesson 2* entitled “Salvation – *the devil’s family and God’s family.”*

Ephesians 2:1-3 speaks about the natural state or spiritual condition of all humankind…before they turned to God in repentance…

**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. –** **Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV**

So, the bible teaches that God has every reason to destroy *all* of humanity, no one is exempt, we have *all* fallen short of God's original standard – His *Holy, sinless and perfect* image that humankind was originally created in. Now, our inclinations are to rebel against God and obey rather, the ruler of the air (which is Satan). Therefore, we *all* deserve damnation!

**“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” – Romans 3:23 NIV**

The Word *‘sin’* actually means *“to fall short.”*

Like an arrow trying to hit the bullseye from miles away, mankind’s attempt to please God by our own effort or wisdom or own religion, will always fall dismally short, not just of the bullseye, but we miss the target entirely! Remember, God is Holy, Perfect and Sinless…we are born the opposite of this!

*Illustration: Spit in Coke / Food made with only one E Coli ingredient*

Our own best efforts at being good will never please a Holy and perfect God, because there is really nothing ‘good’ (godly, clean) in us! We have become wretched.

**We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind. – Isaiah 64:6 NLT**

*Illustration: Even our prayers and so called ‘worship’ is riddled in sin…*

**OK, that’s the bad news. Here’s the Good News! – The Gospel!**

1. There is a way to be saved and restored and made Holy and sinless and perfect like God!

Did you get that? There’s a way not only to be saved from God’s wrath upon sin, but there’s a way to be *re-created* back into the image that we were supposed to be!

* 1. First: The way to be saved!

There is only one person “Jesus Christ the Son of God” who can give us eternal life and restore us back into that beautiful and perfect relationship with God that Adam and Eve were created for in the beginning.

**“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16 ESV**

When Adam and Eve sinned, they tried to cover themselves with leaves and hide among the trees to cover their shame. But God instead “covered them” with the skin of an animal.

Now where on earth did God get those skins from?

Innocent blood had to be shed by God to cover the shame that sin brought to mankind. This was a picture of what was to come…

**…without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. – Hebrews 9:22*b* ESV**

Throughout the Old Testament part of the Bible God required His people to offer a sacrifice of shed blood of a perfect lamb that was spotless and without any blemishes. What was God doing? He was preparing the world for the only true Sacrifice that could actually take away the sin of the world – Jesus Christ His Son who was the only person on earth who ever lived a perfect, sinless and Holy life. God Himself offered this sacrifice! Why? Because it was IMPOSSIBLE for any of us to offer a Perfect, Holy, Sinless and appropriate sacrifice for sin.

God had to intervene... God did it all for us!

* 1. So, what actually happened on the cross?

Well, this is where the Good News becomes even extra Good!

Remember earlier we said that God not only saves us from damnation but He actually makes a way for us to be made Holy and sinless and perfect like we were supposed to be in God’s image?

**For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.** – **2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT**

On the cross, God the Father placed your sin on Christ as he faced the full blow of God’s wrath upon sin. At the same time God takes the righteousness of Christ and places His “righteousness” (right standing before God as perfect and blameless and spotless) and ‘credits’ it to you!

Did you get that? God poured out on Jesus Christ His wrath and anger for your sin! That wrath was meant for you! So, God treated Jesus how you were meant to be treated for your sin and now treats you as if you lived Christ’s perfect, holy, sinless life!

Isn’t that incredible!!! God no longer holds my sin against me BUT instead considers me like His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

That’s not just GOOD NEWS that’s GREAT NEWS! ***That’s the Gospel!***

1. WOW! Is this Gospel for everyone?

It is made available to everyone who *repents* and *believes!*

**"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" – Mark 1:15 NIV**

* 1. Okay, but what does REPENT actually mean?

It means: “turn around,” “turn back” or “to change our way/our minds…and AGREE with God.”

So, in light of the fact that we are fallen sinners, we are to turn back in REPENTANCE toward the way that God originally created human beings to interact with Him in the garden, before sin entered the world. No longer separated, unholy and estranged from Him. No longer following the way of sinful rebellion and having Satan as our master. Rather, we REPENT and *turn to GOD!*

**Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord – Acts 3:19 NIV**

The Bible teaches that God has made Salvation possible by offering Jesus on the cross as a sacrifice (atonement) for sin. Yet, it is only through REPENTANCE and FAITH in what God has done that an individual can actually be forgiven and have their sins wiped out.

i.e. The whole world isn’t automatically saved by what Jesus did on the cross…an individual has to REPENT and BELIEVE to be saved!

* 1. Okay, so we’ve explained REPENTANCE, but what does it mean to BELIEVE?

Many people believe there is *a God* i.e. believe that a God exists. What is vital, is that we believe in the only true God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ – the God of the Bible!

Explaining this Jesus said:

**"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. – John 14:6**

1. You must believe in the RIGHT God…the Only God!
2. Trusting in any *god* other than the God of the Bible, will not save you!
3. Even trusting in a deformed (*made up version*) of the God of the Bible *will not save* you.
4. Anything or anyone else, outside of the Bible is a *counterfeit god!*
5. Therefore, we encourage you to begin studying the Bible, so that you may learn to know God more deeply and completely. *(In another lesson entitled: “How to study the Bible 101” we’ll show you just how to do that!)*

ii. Then, you must *truly* BELIEVE - meaning…

1. You must have *true* FAITH…that Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God who voluntarily took the punishment for your sin.

**For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV**

1. Although this ‘*gift of faith’* will be fleshed out in more detail in “*Lesson 4 - Eternal Security and Perseverance,”* it is imperative that you *have* true FAITH in God and His promise of Eternal life through Jesus Christ, in order to be saved.

So, what is *true faith*?

*Illustration:* ***Santa*** *or the* ***Tooth Fairy*** *vs* ***GOD****) – God exists whether you believe in Him or not!*

There’s a BIG difference between believing that God *exists* and actually *Trusting Him* or having *Faith in Him*…

*Illustration:* ***Tight rope walker*** *(I BELIEVE means: I have FAITH in you!) Trust God with your life…with your Soul?*

1. So, true BELIEF is placing your faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ to be saved!

Do you BELIEVE this way? -- Why not commit yourself to Him in Faith, today!

Finally, although receiving salvation through Jesus Christ by REPENTANCE & FAITH is the most important step one could make – it is just the *first step* in turning back to God. You enter a brand-new life! **There is so much more** in store for you to learn, to surrender and enjoy in a new life in Jesus Christ.

Please go to *“Lesson 2 – Salvation”* to learn more! If you have any questions please email: HisPeopleKnox@gmail.com