

Victory of the Lamb – Pastor Bill Limmer

What the World Needs Now – Good News – Isaiah 52:7-10

Forty years ago, no one would have ever considered a 24-hour news station a good thing. Shortly after that CNN came on the air. And now there are many 24 hours news stations. In addition, we have twitter, Instagram and Facebook and Facebook live to get our news. We live in a world hungry for news. We live in a world where there is so much news that we can have trouble filtering what is important and what is not so much. For example: What do hurricanes Irma, Jose, Maria have in common with North Korea, the Solar Eclipse, the Las Vegas shooting, Bitcoin, and April the Giraffe all have in common? They are all in the Top Ten Trending News stories of 2017. Today there is breaking news, bad news, good news, old news, repeated news, and also fake news. (picture of Haley and her shirt) As you read Haley's shirt.



We all have an internal news feed. What is your news feed saying? For some you have been hurt so bad, your mind is tormented by thoughts of worthlessness. Or perhaps you have been hurt so bad that you are willing to hurt others by seeking retribution or revenge. For some your internal news feed repeats frustration about everything from car trouble, to relationship trouble, to not being able to figure how to put together that blasted Christmas story whose picture looked so good on the box (not that I know anything about that). For some the leading story for the day again is shame and guilt over past mistakes, good left undone; afraid that you are going to get exactly what you deserve. For some your internal news feeds repeats anything but the sound of joy. You are deep into depression and loneliness, you are isolated even if you are around others. We want the bad to go away. You know what is the cause of all this bad news, don't you? It is a small word but a horrific thing – sin. I don't know if you were able to catch the news this morning before you came but I have some good news for you today, life changing news in fact, about you, sin and your relationship with God.

Isaiah 52:7-10 **How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"** On Christmas morning we hope for something out of the ordinary. And in a lowly manger we find hope, the extraordinary, the baby who is Immanuel, God with us. Jesus changes everything because he brings what we can't provide for ourselves peace – Shalom. The Hebrew concept of peace is much greater than ours– it is a peace that is completeness, wholeness, health, welfare, safety soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord that is a result of re-established and repaired relationship with God.

Philippians 2:6-8 **Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!**

And so Christmas is not just an historical story but it is God intervening into your and my personal story. And Jesus meets us where we are at: acceptance for the outcast; befriending for those without friends; comfort for the hurting; deliverance for the broken; everlasting life for those doomed to death; forgiveness for the unforgiveable; grace for all; hope for the hopeless; innocence for those with iniquities; justice for the oppressed and joy for all circumstances; kindness for the timid; love for the unlovable; mercy for the ragged; new life for the everyday; omnipotence for the weak; peace for the anxious; quiet for those who will listen; reconciliation for the rebellious; salvation for the sinner and for those who have come to an end of themselves; time for the busy; unity for the divided; vicarious atonement victory

for every single last person; welcome for the weary; X-ray vision to heal our emotions; yoke that is easy for young and old; zeal for life. And now, even now, with the arms once tiny, once nailed to a tree, with those arms of salvation he picks us up and holds us close to his heart whispering into our hearts the good news of Shalom and salvation because our God reigns. Jesus can take a complete mess like me and you and turn us into a holy Christmas miracle. Christmas is not what you are doing with or for your family or friends or yourself or even for Christ, but rather what he has already done for you. Through Christ you are forgiven of all your sins. If you are forgiven, then you are loved by God. If loved, then you will be blessed. If you are blessed you will be protected, fed, sheltered. And I pray that the Holy Spirit in this time, in this place, in this moment pours God 's love and hope deeply into our hearts that will bring us to unspeakable joy because of the Wonders of His Love. This child Jesus changes everything.

Eight-year-old Timmy was at a camp one summer when he was swimming with all the other 50 or so campers in the lake. When something went terrible wrong and Timmy began to drown. The life guard was constantly scouring the scene. When his eye sight caught something out of the norm. It was Timmy gasping for air looking for help. The life guard jumped off his chair and swam to Timmy as fast as he could. When the life guard reached him, Timmy eyes were wide open looking for help and rescue. The life guard grabbed him up and swam back to shore where they were worked on the little boy for a number of minutes. Timmy survived. And for the rest of that summer camp every time he saw that life guard he would tell everyone, "that's the life guard the saved me." You see for most of the campers and for Timmy until that day, the life guard was no big deal. Didn't think he needed him but now he realized the truth, he always needed him. How about you, do you need Jesus and his good news?

Is. 52:10 **The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.** Christ came for all people, not just Christians, but all people, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, pagans and atheists. He was dead serious about this. In our lives we will often bend over backwards but there comes a point when we say I will go this far and no farther. God said, there is no limit to how far I will go. I will go all the way even if you don't like me, love me, respect me, believe in me. And so he paid the price of redemption for all. A question was raised as to why a navy ship didn't steam to the scene of the Titanic and raise it as quickly as possible hoping that some would have been able to find an air pocket and survive. The answer given was because the cost would be way too high. I'm so glad, so humbled, that Jesus didn't think the cost to save you and me was way too high. Here is good news because Jesus has paid the price: **There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit set me free from the law of sin and death.**

When Jesus was born, the world's greatest news ever was delivered by running shepherds. If you have ever run, you know there is the nice paced jog where you can talk normally and then there are those times when you are sprinting and you can barely say one word at a time. The shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem to see this thing which they were told about. Can you imagine how excited they were? The runners trying to catch their breath say good news, catching a breath, peace, catch a breath good tidings, catch a breath salvation, catch a breath, your God reigns!

Who were those important people who first shared the truth of Jesus with you. A parent or grandparent.? For Jill, it was her college roommate Julie. She will be eternally thankful. Imagine where you would be in this time and in eternity if the good news wasn't shared with you. I want to encourage you to share Jesus with others. **How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.** Share in relationship, share in social media. I know sometimes it feels awkward but you know what makes it easier for me to share? It's when I take Jesus to heart and don't make sharing him a task. Because then I'm sharing my rescuer, my friend, My God, my Savior who loves me enough to lose it all from divinity to life so that I might have an eternal peaceful relationship with him and he has done the same for all people.

Here are a couple of picture of some feet who shared the good news of Jesus through Operation Jesus Cars this past



Tuesday.

Friends open up the gift of Jesus everyday and take a step, use your feet to share him with others. Your message will **bring good news that will cause great joy for all the people.** Amen.